## *An investigation into the effects of the Victorian notions of duty and obedience on the domestic novels of Charlotte Mary Yonge.*

Innerd, J. A.

# AN INVESTIGATION INTO

# THE EFFECTS OF THE VICTORIAN NOTIONS OF DUTY AND OBEDIENCE ON THE DOMESTIC NOVELS OF CHARLOTTE MARY YONGE

JANE A. INNERD

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Durham University, July 1973

# A B S T R A C T

Charlotte Mary Yonge wrote a number of domestic novels, between 1844 and 1901, sixteen of which are considered in this thesis. They accurately portray contemporary Victorian middle-class life and attempt, by means of lessons in moral behaviour, to instruct the reader in the importance of duty and obedience. These notions were given particular religious emphasis by Evangelicals and Tractarians respectively and were widely accepted as part of the moral code in Victorian society.

The early novels take up problems which can befall adolescents; great emphasis is given to the importance of the duty to obey parental wishes. The Heir of Redclyffe contrasts the courtships of two couples whose understanding of the requirements of duty and obedience to parents are very different. Three novels examine women's responsibilities and contrast the behaviour of a number of women characters. Written in three different decades, these novels show that Charlotte Yonge came to disapprove of a new modern code of behaviour for women. A group of novels identified as family chronicles each portray a large family with several

adolescent members who respond in different ways to the extra domestic responsibilities which they must assume on the death of one or both parents.

The later novels show the effects of a much changed society on Miss Yonge's literary technique. The requirements of duty and obedience as she understood them were no longer applicable in a contemporary setting. Eventually the overall effect of the notions was detrimental to Charlotte Yonge's domestic fiction. She could not adapt the notions to a changing Victorian society nor could she abandon the necessity of teaching a lesson in moral behaviour. Her best novels were written when she was in agreement with prevalent opinion as regards behaviour. Charlotte Yonge was a good story-teller but not a great writer.

# C O N T E N T S

# C H A P T E R  I

## DUTY AND OBEDIENCE I: VICTORIAN SOCIETY

### i

### Religion in Victorian England

The influence of religion on Victorian society was very great. The precise degree of influence cannot be determined, yet religion cannot be overlooked in any interpretation of Victorian society. Kitson Clark declares:

> It might not be too extravagant to say of the nineteenth century that probably in no other century, except in the seventeenth and perhaps the twelfth, did the claims of religion occupy so large a part in the nation's life, or did men speaking in the name of religion contrive to exercise so much power.[1]

Further confirmation of this point comes from Gillian Avery: "Victorian England was religious. It was not merely that a great deal of thought was given to religious topics, but that the customs of society were greatly affected by religious practices."[2]

---

[1] The Making of Victorian England (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1963), p. 20.

[2] Victorian People: In Life and Literature (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1970), p. 137. See also Walter E. Houghton, The Victorian Frame of Mind, 1830-1870 (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1957), p. 22, fn. 77; David Thomson, England in the Nineteenth Century (London: Penguin Books, 1966), p. 107; Owen Chadwick, The Victorian Church, 2 vols. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966), passim.

Victorian notions of duty and obedience existed independently of the denominations and beliefs of the people who held them, but at the same time, it must be observed that the emphasis on these notions was in part the outcome of religious fervour in the nineteenth century. In the early years of the Victorian era, the Anglican Church experienced a religious revival brought about jointly by the Evangelicals and the Tractarians, whose points of view were, however, very different and, in some respects, quite opposed. The Evangelicals placed emphasis on "organized prayer and preaching, and on the strict observance of Sunday,"[3] and on a personal interpretation of the Bible. The Tractarians, on the other hand, maintained the authority of the church and the importance of church ordinances. Within the Church of England there was, therefore, controversy and sometimes conflict.

Further controversy arose from what seemed to be attacks on the very institution of the church and the nature of Christianity. Chadwick tells us:

> Three forces were driving Christianity to restate doctrine: natural science, historical criticism, moral feeling. Natural science shattered assumptions about Genesis and about miracles. Criticism questioned whether all history in the Bible was true. Moral feeling found the love of God hard to reconcile with hellfire or scapegoat-atonement.[4]

[3] Thomson, England in the Nineteenth Century, p. 107.

[4] Chadwick, The Victorian Church, I, 551.

Natural science had an impact on Christianity because Geology had become "the science of the day."[5] Many geologists, amateur and professional, were able to reconcile their findings and their faith, but many were not. Geologists discovered discrepancies between their findings and what the Bible taught. The world, for example, was much older than the Bible indicated. For many, an attack on one fact in the Bible opened all its facts and therefore all its teachings to questioning. Historical criticism, too, seemed to attack the Bible. Analysis of texts showed, among other things, that some books of the Bible could not have been written by the men to whom they were attributed. This seemed to attack the authority of the Bible and therefore the authority of the church's teachings. The church in some cases denied or ignored historical or scientific evidence and because it failed to take a stand some men were driven to scepticism, agnosticism or outright athiesm. Even candidates for ordination could not ignore the new findings. It seemed to some that "The Christian Church taught what was not true."[6]

For the Victorians who faced the new evidence and who considered what the consequences might be, a number of vital questions arose:

[5] Chadwick, The Victorian Church, I, 558.

[6] Ibid., II, 2.

> Is there a God or is there not, and if so, is he a person or an impersonal force? Is there a heaven and a hell? or a heaven but no hell? or neither? If there is a true religion, is it Theism or Christianity? And what is Christianity? Roman Catholicism or Protestanism? Is it Church or Chapel? High Church? Broad Church? Low Church?[7]

These questions could not be answered easily. Moreover, men feared the effect that the answers, if there were any answers, to these fundamental questions might have on the very nature of English society. It was widely held that religious beliefs, based on the Bible, were the foundations of social conduct and moral standards. Because religion and morals were so closely linked, the Victorians "were afraid of losing the Bible, and with it the evidence for the future life, the motive for right conduct, the ethical standards of civilized society."[8]

The question for many was how to behave in the face of the attack on religion. "For 'everyone' agreed that any discarding of the Christian sanctions of duty, obedience, patience under suffering, and brotherly love was obviously 'fraught with grievous danger to property and to state.'"[9] The question of how to behave was vital not least because the Christian ethic was believed to be the basis of moral conduct. However there seemed to be no immediately available philosphy or code to replace the Christian ethic. One antidote to religious perplexities was hard work[10] which was prescribed by John Keble and

[7] Houghton, The Victorian Frame of Mind, p. 11.

[8] Chadwick, The Victorian Church, II, 25.

[9] Houghton, op. cit., p. 59.

[10] Ibid., p. 133.

Thomas Arnold because it "was a practical means of exorcizing the mood of ennui and despair which so often accompanied the loss of faith."[11] They tried to circumvent the problem by advising that speculation should be abandoned in favour of useful activity.

It must also be acknowledged that many Victorians were only dimly aware of controversy and attack. "The ordinary worshipper was slow to adapt his mind to Biblical criticism."[12] Instead, the "ordinary worshipper" rested his faith in the authority of the church. "The truth is that to a large extent the will to believe overrode the desire to question, and private judgement was renounced, both deliberately and unconsciously, for external authority."[13]

ii

## Duty: The Evangelical Influence

The widespread acceptance of the notion of duty in Victorian England was largely, although not entirely, due to the influence of the Evangelical ethic. The Evangelical ethic had such an impact because it was espoused by the middle classes in England. As they became financially and then politically powerful they were able to impose upon society the standards for virtuous behaviour in which they believed or professed to believe.

[11] Houghton, op. cit., p. 251.

[12] Chadwick, op. cit., 11, 130.

[13] Houghton, op. cit., p. 94.

G. M. Young tells us that the influence of the Evangelical ethic was already far reaching at the beginning of the Victorian era. It "rose and spread with the advance of the class which principally sustained it: Wesley and his followers carried it into regions which the old churches had hardly touched. . . ."[14] As the middle class grew and prospered, so too did the Evangelical ethic, until, by "the beginning of the Victorian age the faith was already hardening into a code."[15] This code became the hall-mark, not solely of the Evangelicals but of the middle classes in general. Young says, "The sense of being under a Code accompanies us through the early Victorian decades."[16] It was a "solidly grounded code of duty and self-restraint" and its emergence in the nineteenth century may be regarded as fortunate for England, owing to the nation's "sudden access of power, prosperity, and knowledge."[17] Asa Briggs likewise observes the existence of "a common moral code" and adds that it "was shared by most groups in society, including scientists, creative artists, and intellectuals."[18] This indicates that although the "dominant morality of mid-Victorian England was very closely associated with the

[14] Victorian England. Portrait of an Age (London: Oxford University Press, 1960), p. 4.

[15] Young, Victorian England, p. 4.

[16] Ibid., p. 17

[17] Ibid., p. 100.

[18] Victorian People: A Reassessment of Persons and Themes, 1851-1867 (New York: Harper and Row, 1963), p. 3.

middle-class element in English society,"[19] the association was not confined to "the mercantile middle classes."[20]

From what has been said, it is apparent that the Victorians commonly judged each other in terms of moral behaviour. One result of this was hypocrisy, the maintenance of correct forms of behaviour without the benefit of underlying principles.[21] But the very fact of such hypocrisy is further evidence of the widespread influence of the code of acceptable moral behaviour. The Evangelicals had in fact "moralized society," and they had "established a certain level of behaviour for all who wished to stand well with their fellows."[22]

G. M. Young emphasises the fact that all classes were under the influence of the code and indicates the kinds of activities, as well as the areas of conduct, in which dutiful behaviour was required and the means by which such behaviour could be guaranteed:

> Evangelicalism had imposed on society, even on classes which were indifferent to its religious basis and unaffected by its economical appeal, its code of Sabbath observance, responsibility and

[19] Asa Briggs, The Age of Improvement (London: Longmans, Green and Co. Ltd., 1966), p. 467.

[20] Briggs, Victorian People, p. 3.

[21] Briggs says, "Although there was a common moral code, it was often stretched at the edges or superficially maintained with the support of cant and hypocrisy." Victorian People, p. 4. J. H. Buckley says that the Evangelical religion animated many Victorians and that "Whether actuated by self-interest or Christian principle, moral duty remained for most a categorical imperative." The Victorian Temper: A Study in Literary Culture (New York: Vintage Books, 1964), p. 9.

[22] Young, Victorian People, p. 4.

> philanthropy: of discipline in the home, regularity in affairs; it had created a most effective technique of agitation, of private persuasion and social persecution.[23]

In each case private behaviour came under public scrutiny. To begin with, Sabbath observance, "to remember the Sabbath day and to keep it holy,"[24] was interpreted to mean that Victorians must attend church at least once each Sunday. This too was part of the minimum requirement of the Anglican Church for those who wished to be called her members. Additional Sabbath observances depended upon one's particular belief, but special toys for children and special Sunday reading were not uncommon in Victorian families.[25]

The importance of church attendance led to another activity in which Victorians could behave dutifully towards their religious denomination. Church building and church restoration were serious and important activities and had, moreover, the advantage of providing enduring testimony to the seriousness of religious obligations. A great number of churches were built during the early and mid-Victorian years[26] and restorations made the interiors of churches more fitting for the serious attendants:

[23] Victorian England, p. 5.

[24] Ibid., p. 2.

[25] Charlotte M. Yonge, Womankind (London: Mozley and Smith, 1876), p. 15.

[26] Elie Halévy, The Age of Peel and Cobden. A History of the English People, 1841-1852 (London: Ernest Benn Limited, 1947), p. 298.

> Churches were swept: churchyards tidied; church windows cleaned. High pews behind which generations of the comfortable had dozed the sermon out, red velvet cushions on which the preacher had pounded the division of his text, the village band in the gallery, the clerk under the pulpit, /all/ gradually disappeared: very cautiously, crosses were introduced, and flowers and lights.[27]

It was an improving and a reforming zeal which prompted church restoration. The same is true of Victorian ventures into "responsibility and philanthropy." They too called for dutiful public behaviour. In order to assert their own respectability, the Victorians turned their attention to those less fortunate than themselves and accepted the duty of improving their conditions of living.

> To induce, therefore, some modicum of cleanliness and foresight, to find some substitute for savage sport and savage drinking, to attract the children to school and the parents to church, to awaken some slight interest in books and the world beyond the end of the street, on such limited, necessary ends as these was bent that enormous apparatus of early Victorian philanthropy. . . .[28]

[27] G. M. Young, "Portrait of an Age," in Early Victorian England, ed. G. M. Young (London: Oxford University Press, 1934), p. 475. J. E. Baker notes a parallel interest in novels, "the chief concerns of the Tractarian fiction of the first decade /the forties/: church restoration, the revival of Catholic practices in the services, and care for the poor." The Novel and the Oxford Movement (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1932), p. 22.

[28] Young, "Portrait of an Age," p. 454. Thomson says that "intrinsic to Victorian thought" was a "generous humanitarian impulse. . . . "England in the Nineteenth Century, p. 106.

To this end the Victorians founded clubs and societies, many of them under the direction of the church, through which they could demonstrate their responsibility by giving up their time or their money in order to reach the poor.

"Discipline in the home" required not only that the father should act as head of the household and that his wife and children should be dutiful and obedient to him but also that he should be seen to be disciplined himself. He must "limit the gratification of the senses to the pleasures of a table lawfully earned and the embraces of a wife lawfully wedded. . . ."[29] No irregularity could be allowed because an "unguarded look, a word, a gesture, a picture, or a novel, might plant a seed of corruption in the most innocent heart, and the same word or gesture might betray a lingering affinity with the class below."[30]

In the conduct of their home life the Victorians had twin goals, moral responsibility and class respectability and these were also the goals to be achieved in attaining "regularity in affairs." The Victorians, Trevelyan says, laboured under a "double anxiety" which was "to obey a given ethical code and to 'get on' in profitable business. . . ."[31] It was helpful to be

[29] Young, Victorian England, p. 2.

[30] Ibid.

[31] English Social History (New York: Oxford University Press, 1950), p. 495.

seen to be prosperous because "the virtues of a Christian after the Evangelical model were easily exchangeable with the virtues of a successful merchant or a rising manufacturer. . . ."[32] Prosperity was almost equated with moral righteousness and since a certain amount of financial mobility was possible, it was looked upon almost as a duty to rise financially, as well as to behave morally.

> Formerly it had simply meant the obligation to fulfill one's calling: everyone was "to do his duty in that state of life to which it had pleased God to call him." But that was alien to both the principles and the temper of the new era. "To push on, to climb vigorously on the slippery steps of the social ladder, to raise ourselves one step or more out of the rank of life in which we were born, is now converted into a duty."[33]

The manner in which duty became so important a part of the code required, as Young says, an "effective technique . . . of private persuasion and social persecution." The Victorians had such a technique and its name was respectability. "The Evangelical discipline, secularized as respectability, was the strongest binding force"[34] in the nation. The mark of respectability was the end product of the Evangelical influence. "Respectability was at once a select status and a universal motive."[35] As a "universal motive" respectability

[32] Young, Victorian England, p. 2.

[33] Houghton, The Victorian Frame of Mind, p. 187.

[34] Young, Victorian England, p. 5.

[35] Young, "Portrait of an Age," p. 434.

combined the ambitious aims of both "progress and salvation."[36]

> The greater and better part of English society accepted the social structure and moral objective of the nation, as a community of families, all rising, or to be raised, to a higher respectability. To those postulates their criticism of life was not directed: they were satisfied, not indeed with the world as it was, for they were all, in their way, reformers, but as it would become by the application of those reasoned and tested principles which made up the scheme of progress and salvation.[37]

It was, therefore, a duty to apply "those reasoned and tested principles" to the conduct of one's life and anyone who did not do so was not only failing to live by the code of acceptable behaviour but also failing to promote the welfare of mankind. The importance of the notion of duty in Victorian society is, therefore, difficult to overestimate.

iii

Obedience: The Tractarian Influence

One of the requirements of dutiful behaviour is obedience. Like the notion of duty, obedience was made especially important for Victorians by the religious revival which was powerful in Victorian England. It was the Tractarians who, for special reasons, laid particular emphasis on the notion of obedience.

[36] Young, Victorian England, p. 13.

[37] Ibid.

> Deep in the historic consciousness of the clergy of the Church of England--dependent no doubt on the history of their church during the seventeenth century--was a strong desire to find and obey lawful authority. This desire was strengthened by the Oxford Movement.[38]

The Oxford Movement, whose leaders and sympathizers were known as Tractarians, came into being during the second quarter of the nineteenth century because the authority of the church and the degree to which it was independent of the Crown was being called into question. When Parliament eliminated ten Bishoprics from the church in Ireland, this was taken as the signal to counterattack. John Keble preached against the proposed action at Oxford on the 14th July, 1833, and this date was taken by John Henry Newman to be the day when the Oxford Movement began.[39] The principal leaders of the movement besides Keble were Newman and Professor Edward Pusey. In his sermon Keble countered the notion that the authority of the church derives from the State.[40] Rather, he claimed that the authority of the church is determined by the apostolic succession of her priests. The doctrine of authority was therefore of prime importance in the Oxford Movement[41] and this to a great degree explains the stress which the Tractarians laid upon the notion of obedience.

[38] Chadwick, The Victorian Church, II, 315.

[39] Owen Chadwick, The Mind of the Oxford Movement (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1960), p. 13

[40] Ibid., p. 39.

[41] Ibid., p. 42.

The Prayer Book, which embodies the regulations of the church and to which her members owe obedience, gained greatly in importance during the early years of the Victorian era. "The Evangelical and Tractarian movements and the whole Victorian quest for reverence, elevated the Book of Common Prayer as a vehicle for worship."[42] For the Tractarians the "lawful authority" of the Prayer Book "seemed to demand more ceremony than they were then using: especially at the time of holy communion. . . ."[43] The efforts of the leaders of the movement to educate the Anglican clergy in the dictates of the Prayer Book resulted in a series of tracts, from whence the Tractarians get their name. The purpose of the tracts was to teach the clergy "to re-assess the authority of the church. . . ."[44] We need not be concerned here with the tracts themselves other than to note that the leaders "began with the doctrine of authority and asked how best to execute its ordinances."[45]

Authority demands obedience; and for the Tractarians the ordinances of the Prayer Book required strict observation. "In the Prayer Book they were delighted to find provision for daily service, private confession, weekly celebration of the sacrament, and

[42] Chadwick, The Victorian Church, II, 310.

[43] Ibid., II, 315.

[44] Chadwick, The Mind of the Oxford Movement, p. 54.

[45] Chadwick, The Victorian Church, I, 213.

splendid ornaments if the ornaments rubric of the Prayer Book were correctly understood."[46] Of course strict adherence to these provisions on the part of some members of the church was nothing new. Anglicans who were strict or "stiff" in their interpretation of their duties to the church had been termed "high" since the seventeenth century.[47] Professor Pusey, in the course of a simple summary of Tractarian teachings, says that Tractarians have "High thoughts of the two Sacraments."[48]

Where the Prayer Book was concerned, such obedience was regarded as essential because the Tractarians believed men to be "responsible for their lightest sin."[49] Newman said in a sermon given while he was still an Anglican,

> Keep in mind all along that we are Christians and accountable beings, who have fixed principles of right and wrong, by which all things must be tried, and have religious habits to be matured within them, towards which all things are to be made subservient.[50]

The principles of right and wrong were to be found in the Prayer Book, the church authority. Obedience to these principles, it was recognized, was a matter of choice; men "could choose the right if they but would."[51] It was also

[46] Chadwick, The Victorian Church, I, 212.

[47] Chadwick, The Mind of the Oxford Movement, p. 14.

[48] Ibid.

[49] Ibid., p. 51

[50] Houghton, The Victorian Frame of Mind, p. 237. Quoted from Parochial Sermons, 2, 378, no. 30.

[51] Chadwick, The Mind of the Oxford Movement, p. 50.

recognized that it was a difficult choice, a narrow way. Men "were perpetually being confronted by the broad way which beckoned and the narrow way which appeared so steep."[52] The Prayer Book showed the way and the message or dogma of the Prayer Book could be correctly understood by attending religious worship frequently. Obedience to the Prayer Book was therefore the cornerstone of salvation.[53]

[52] Chadwick, The Mind of the Oxford Movement, p. 50.

[53] Keble believed that church attendance was a duty to God. Chadwick, The Victorian Church, II, 215. Chadwick says of the Tractarian point of view, "There was salvation in more precise obedience to the Prayer Book." Ibid., II, 175.

# C H A P T E R  II

## DUTY AND OBEDIENCE II: CHARLOTTE M. YONGE

### i

### Duty and Obedience in Charlotte Yonge's Life and Work

The notions of duty and obedience were important to Charlotte Mary Yonge and they are the basis of the behaviour which she advocates in her novels of middle class Victorian life.

Miss Yonge was a Victorian. She was born in 1823 and died in 1901 and lived, therefore, throughout a period when the general climate of opinion gave a great deal of emphasis to the moral values of duty and obedience. She came from a family[1] whose members had been country squires and High Anglican for many generations. The Yonges were neither members of the rising middle class nor sympathetic to the Evangelical point of view. Nevertheless, even Anglicans of the Tractarian persuasion, such as the Yonges, were not immune to the powerful and particular emphasis given to the notion of duty by the Evangelicals. Charlotte Yonge and her family, like many Tractarians, embraced the notion just as fervently as did the "Low" churchmen and the rest of the middle classes.

[1] For details of the Yonge family background see Georgina Battiscombe, Charlotte Mary Yonge: The Story of an Uneventful Life (London: Constable and Company, Ltd., 1943), pp. 19-24.

One of the differences between Tractarian and Evangelical lay is the different attitudes each took toward the notions of duty and obedience. The duty of the Tractarian was determined by the authority of the Anglican Church and he acted in obedience to that authority. The duty of the Evangelical was determined by his own conscience and he acted in obedience to its dictates. In practice the effects of the differences in attitude might not have been too dissimilar.

Certainly in Charlotte Yonge there was united a strong sense of duty, wherever it originated, and an equally strong belief in the value of obedience. As part of this belief she accepted the importance of obedience in domestic life as a correct interpretation of the fifth commandment. In this, as in all other matters she accepted the authority of the Anglican Church as it was interpreted by the Tractarian leader, John Keble.

When she was twelve, in 1835, John Keble took the living of a combined parish in Hampshire of the two villages of Hursley and of Otterbourne where Charlotte lived. He prepared her for her confirmation and thereby permanently moulded her religious beliefs.[2] Only once, when she was twenty years old, did Charlotte confide to Keble that she had doubts; she did not doubt her faith but the authority on which it rested. Like Keble, Charlotte Yonge believed the Church of England to be catholic, and

[2] Battiscombe, op. cit., pp. 54-55 and 155.

Charlotte wondered whether the Roman Catholic Church, rather than the Anglican, might not embody the true faith. Keble counselled her against such an assessment[3] and in general he warned her against too much discussion of religious questions.[4] She took his advice and the result can be seen in her novels where, instead of concerning herself with controversial matters, she attempts to convey the obligations and requirements which Anglican principles seemed to her to demand in domestic life. This is evident from the very beginning of her writing career.

The idea for Charlotte Yonge's first novel was a result of her reading of Mrs. Harriet Mozley's novel, The Fairy Bower. Miss Yonge enjoyed the novel but she did not quite approve of the relationship between Grace, the heroine, and her mother. She says, "There was something--together with the wonderful cleverness of portraiture-- in the reticence of Grace to her mother, that certainly set me to demonstrate the contrary habit. . . ."[5] The demonstration is a story entitled Abbeychurch; or, Self-Control and Self-Conceit. It is her earliest publication with the exception of "Le Chateau de Morville,"

[3] Battiscombe, op. cit., pp. 69-70.

[4] Charlotte M. Yonge ed., Musings over the Christian Year and Lyra Innocentium, together with a Few Gleanings of Recollections of the Rev. J. Keble, gathered by Several Friends (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1871), p. 10.

[5] "Lifelong Friends," in A Chaplet for Charlotte Yonge, ed. Georgina Battiscombe and Marghanita Laski (London: The Cresset Press, 1965), p. 183.

a story published in order to raise money at a church bazaar in 1839, when Charlotte was sixteen years old.[6]

The manuscript must have been read by many in the Yonge's circle of friends because Charlotte records that friends "whose kindness astonished me"[7] encouraged her to publish it. This decision, however, was not Charlotte's to make even though she was twenty-one years old in 1844, the year of publication of Abbeychurch; for Charlotte Yonge was a dutiful daughter. Her father, who fulfilled his duty as the head of the family, took charge of the manuscript. Before taking any steps to make it public, however, he needed first to determine his daughter's motive for wishing to publish the novel. Miss Yonge recalls,

> I cannot forget, however, my father, before taking any steps about Abbey Church, gravely putting it before me that there were three reasons for which one might desire to publish--love of vanity, or of gain, or the wish to do good. I answered, with tears, that I really hoped I had written with the purpose of being useful to young girls like myself.[8]

The love of vanity was, of course, unacceptable to the Yonge family and for many years all Charlotte Yonge's publications were anonymous. After the great success of

[6] Battiscombe, op. cit. pp. 57-58.

[7] C. M. Yonge, "Preface," in Scenes and Characters: or, Eighteen Months at Beechcroft (London: Macmillan and Co., 1886), p. viii.

[8] "Lifelong Friends," p. 183.

The Heir of Redclyffe, published in 1853, she used the phrase 'by the author of the Heir of Redclyffe' on the title-page of her novels written after the Heir even if, as in later years, her name also appeared on the title page. Gain, too, was an unacceptable reason for writing; it was not ladylike.[9] In her old age Miss Yonge noted that for many years she had made it a point of honour not to use any of the money she earned on herself.[10] The wish to do good, however, was an acceptable motive and it was so favoured by her father that Charlotte Yonge henceforth conceived it as her duty not to publish anything except with the intention of improving her readers.

Some of her many works[11] attempt to do good in a practical way; they are text books or works of outright instruction. Others, including many of her short stories for children, aim to do good by means of direct moralizing. In the domestic novels, Miss Yonge uses indirect means. Generally speaking Charlotte Yonge's method of instructing her readers in the domestic novels is to create characters with personal faults or shortcomings to overcome and to place them in circumstances as like those of real life as possible. The situations which give rise to the actions are not immediately or

[9] C. M. Yonge, Womankind, p. 222.

[10] "Lifelong Friends," p. 183.

[11] There are, to date, two published bibliographies of Charlotte Yonge's works. One is Appendix B in Christabel Coleridge's biography, Charlotte Mary Yonge. Her Life and Letters (London: Macmillan and Co. Ltd., 1903), pp. 355-368. The other is in A Chaplet for Charlotte Yonge edited for the Charlotte Yonge Society by Georgina Battiscombe and Marghanita Laski (London: The Cresset Press, 1965), pp. 204-215. The first has 192 entries, the second 237; both are incomplete.

apparently favourable to ideal moral behaviour. The action of the novels consists of the attempts by some characters to overcome their faults and to improve their situations, morally speaking. The outcome of the characters' attempts, as well as their development throughout the novels, provide the reader with lessons in moral behaviour. It was very important for Miss Yonge that each novel should contain a moral lesson for it was by means of the lesson that she was able to do good and only this made novel reading a worthwhile occupation.[12]

In Abbeychurch the main characters are several adolescent girls and their mothers. It becomes clear as we read the story that those daughters who are not reticent, like Grace in The Fairy Bower, but instead are open and obedient, are the better and happier girls. When the novel was republished in 1872, Charlotte Yonge noted in her preface that, although she saw defects in the work which she could not correct without rewriting the story, "the real lesson intended to be conveyed, of obedience and sincerity, of course remains unchanged."[13]

[12] Chadwick notes that a "moral intention" was common to many novelists in the early Victorian years:

> Nearly all the novelists of the earlier part of the century believed that they wrote novels as a way of conveying a moral or religious message--Charles Kingsley and The Water Babies, Elizabeth Sewell, and above all Charlotte Yonge, to whom the sole intention of writing was a moral intention, and yet the result was at times very nearly great art. Many of these writers could only justify to themselves the time spent in writing such books if the books were intended in some way to do good.

The Victorian Church, II, 462-3.

[13] (London: J. and C. Mozley, 1872), p. vi.

As in Abbeychurch, so in all her novels of contemporary life, Miss Yonge attempts to do good by illustrating a lesson in moral behaviour. The lessons pertain to domestic behaviour and are based on the notions of duty and obedience. The lessons illustrate the necessity for these notions in domestic life and to a lesser extent in religious life. Throughout her long literary career Miss Yonge tried to show that these two notions always require the same forms of behaviour, therefore the lessons in duty and obedience which Miss Yonge set out to teach did not change; but Victorian England did. Slowly, year by year, changes in Victorian society are to be noted in Charlotte Yonge's domestic novels even though the forms of behaviour which she advocated ramined the same.

Charlotte Yonge's picture of rural English life is very accurate, even as Victorian life changed, and the detailed accuracy of her portrayal is an important feature of the domestic novels, primarily for literary but also for sociological reasons. Charlotte Yonge has been called a social historian[14] and so, in a sense, she is. Her novels depict such a detailed picture that it has been possible to trace the introduction of sewers into southern rural England by noting her references to them.[15]

[14] "The Novels of Miss Yonge," Edinburgh Review CCII (1905), 563.

[15] Alethea Hayter, "The Sanitary Idea and A Victorian Novelist," History Today, 19 (1969), 840-847.

Her accuracy and the almost complete limitation of her settings to rural England may be seen, at least in part, as the result of some advice which John Keble gave to Charlotte Yonge and which she took, obediently, all her life. Charlotte was afraid that the success of The Heir of Redclyffe would be a source of vanity for her.[16] Keble was himself the author of the very successful book of poetry, The Christian Year, and he understood her temptation. He believed that success could be "the trial of one's life,"[17] but he also believed that it need have no outward effect on the author. So he counselled Charlotte, "If you keep watch and go on in your own natural way, it need do you no harm."[18] Charlotte Yonge took this to mean that she should continue to live a secluded life in Otterbourne where she was born. She obeyed the authority of Keble, as formerly she obeyed the authority of her father. So successfully did she keep the "watch" recommended by Keble, that after her death a friend wrote:

> I heard a great deal about the pressure put upon her to come up to town and allow herself to be fêted as a celebrity, but this she steadily refused, and it seemed to me that personal admiration and adulation was peculiarly distasteful to her at all times.[19]

16 Coleridge, Charlotte Mary Yonge, p. 192.

17 Ibid., p. 195.

18 Ibid.

19 Ibid., p. 228.

For whatever reason, Charlotte Yonge shunned the metropolis, nor did she travel either widely or frequently.[20] She did read a great deal,[21] newspapers and journals as well as fiction, and she knew, therefore, what was going on in the world. Nevertheless the view of society which she presents is not very representative of Victorian society as a whole. It is limited to her own experience of life, largely to her own class and surroundings, and to the events which were likely to occur in rural villages and towns. There are few references to events beyond her domestic horizons and it is only when social changes become so widespread that they make their way into England's villages that they are recorded in Charlotte Yonge's novels. She is "the novelist par excellence of the country parish" but as Chadwick goes on to say, her picture is not one of "romantic nostalgia."[22]

In her domestic novels little attention is paid to male activities such as the professions, politics, industry, farming, field sports and the like, and even less to sexual passion and crime. The stories are almost entirely concerned with characters of middle class origins, within predominately rural settings and in situations usually connected to domestic and church

[20] Battiscombe, Charlotte Mary Yonge, pp. 34-36, 42, 44, 81, 129, 145.

[21] C. A. E. Moberly, Dulce Donum. George Moberly; His Family and Friends (London: John Murray, 1911), p. 9.

[22] The Victorian Church, II, 214.

life and always concerned with dutiful and obedient behaviour.

These limitations of the domestic novels, whether imposed by others or by herself, enabled Miss Yonge to concentrate on what she knew well, that is to say, the life that went on around her and the spiritual and intellectual life that went on within her. Not all her literary talent by any means went into the writing of domestic fiction, however. Her intellectual energy also found an outlet in the writing of essays and an analysis of one collection of these essays is of great importance because of the light it throws on her concept of the notions of duty and obedience.

ii

## Duty and Obedience in Womankind

In 1876 Charlotte Yonge published a book of twenty-six essays entitled Womankind. The essays were written for the purpose of guiding women, of all ages, in first determining and then carrying out both their domestic and their religious duties, in obedience to the dictates of the authority set over them. However, because she recommends dutiful and obedient behaviour in every essay, much of what is written can be applied equally to children and adolescents of both sexes, persons whom she would expect to be dutiful and obedient. The views expressed in the essays are based on Miss Yonge's religious beliefs and offer an opportunity to analyze the relationship between those religious beliefs and the notions of duty and obedience.

The essays represent Miss Yonge's mature point of view as regards duty and obedience; she was fifty-three in the year in which they were published. Yet the views she expresses in them are the same as those in the domestic novels, certainly up to the decade in which Womankind was written. It is clear that Miss Yonge's views on acceptable behaviour, once formed, did not change although Womankind was written and published during a decade when the code on which Victorian morality was based was rapidly loosing influence.[23] It is apparent in the essays that Charlotte Yonge is aware of another modern set of ideas concerning woman's behaviour and when she remarks on modern practices Miss Yonge is careful to explain why she believes them to be wrong. However, Miss Yonge exhorts her readers to hold on to the old standard of behaviour and she is careful to delineate what that standard entails as regards domestic behaviour.

The first chapter of Womankind is entitled "Woman's Status."[24] The first and most important point is that woman is inferior to man. Charlotte Yonge's belief in the inferiority of woman has a religious basis. She says that the first woman, Eve, "was created as a help meet to man," but she was the first to fail God's law

[23] Houghton, The victorian Frame of Mind, pp. 10-11.

[24] In addition to chapter 1, five chapters are of particular interest with regard to Charlotte Yonge's domestic novels: Chapter 10 on "Religion," chapter 17 on "Parents and Children," cahpter 22 on "Wives," chapter 30 on "Home," and chapter 32 on "Authority." These chapters, rather than those on "Dress" and "Money-making," for example, deal with the more serious aspects of duty and obedience in relation to family life and woman's responsibilities and they discuss the principles which we find illustrated in the domestic novels.

and therefore a "punishment of physical weakness and subordination" is the just result for all of womankind.[25] However, Christianity has brought a great benefit to womankind through the honour which God bestowed upon Mary. "The Blessing conferred upon the holy Mother of our Lord became the antidote to the punishment of Eve's transgression; and in proportion to the full reception of the spirit of Christianity has woman thenceforth been elevated to her rightful position as the help-meet." (Womankind, 4)

The "rightful position as the help-meet" begins early. "It is almost certain that she will begin as help-meet to her father or brothers;" (Womankind, 6) and to many women, she continues, comes the "Divinely-ordained estate of marriage, and the duties and blessings it entails, all sanctified through Him." (Womankind, 6) For the woman who is not married and who does not have an individual man as "a direct object for her obedience," (Womankind, 7) there is still a role as help-meet if she accepts her responsibility "to the one great Society of which she is a part," and she can be content in "an outwardly secular life" by teaching or nursing or a number of other useful activities, because she is dedicated and "her heart rests in Him. . . ." (Womankind, 7) Whatever her role, Miss Yonge concludes, "It is only as a daughter of the Church that woman can have her place, or be satisfied as to her vocation." (Womankind, 8)

[25] p. 1. Hereafter all references to this work in this chapter will be given with the title and page number in parenthesis after each quotation.

To be a daughter of the church assumes, of course, that a woman is religious, even more, that she is a communicant and for Charlotte Yonge this could only mean a communicant of the Church of England. Chapter 10 on "Religion" begins, "Confirmation has set the seal, and the young have entered on that state which will in a manner endure for the rest of their lives, and I therefore write rather to them than of them."[26] (Womankind, 7) Miss Yonge writes "to" the young because she wishes to recommend to them a strict and dutiful interpretation of their religious obligations. However, the "rule of God's law" (Womankind, 73) is not easy to delineate. "It is difficult, not to say impossible, to lay down abstract rules of observance for everyone, because duties and characters differ so much, as well as degrees of spirituality. . . ." (Womankind, 76)

Her source of authority is the Prayer Book. She says, "there is a standard required by the Church of all who would not lose their outward membership with her, and this is . . . Communion three times a year, and attendance at public worship on Sunday." (Womankind, 76) This is "the lowest rule" which the Church acknowledges, however, it is continually difficult to live a Christian life and the Church can give far more aid than is to be acquired merely by fulfilling the minimum requirements.

[26] In the previous chapter on "The Teens," Charlotte Yonge emphasises the importance of confirmation, an importance which echoes John Keble's belief. She says, "It does often happen that Confirmation is the starting-point in life." (Womankind, 7.) See Georgina Battiscombe, John Keble. A Study in Limitations (London: Constable and Company Ltd., 1963), p. 178.

"Her rules for such members as wish to be trained up within her, are morning and evening prayer, frequent Communion, and the due observance of Sundays Feast and Fast days." (Womankind, 76) These observances, Charlotte Yonge says, are the "framework of religion." (Womankind, 79)

Morning and Evening prayer are, she feels confident, the habit of anyone "who reads these papers," and she suggests, in addition to books of useful prayers, the use of a "mid-day prayer." (Womankind, 77) It is important also that some prayer be carried out privately, "each soul must also have its own communings with God, and these must be alone. The individual life must have its private self-examination, confession of sins, and entreaty for pardon," (Womankind, 77) which can not be shared.

Frequent communion is the most important observance of the religious ritual. Keble instituted monthly celebrations when he became vicar of Hursley and Otterbourne.[27] Charlotte Yonge says that "above all stands the Holy Eucharist, as the means of maintaining our inward life." (Womankind, 79) Her call for due observance of Sundays again directly reflects Keble's influence. She says that Sunday church-going "ought to be looked on as our regular homage to God, and therefore to be made the first consideration in all our arrangements. . . ."[28] (Womankind, 78)

[27] Charlotte M. Yonge, John Keble's Parishes, A History of Hursley and Otterbourne (London: Macmillan and Co. Ltd., 1898), p. 99.

[28] In her biography of John Keble, Mrs. Battiscombe states, "At Hursley great stress was laid on the duty of Church-going, which was regarded literally as a 'service' due to God rather than as a means of man's edification." John Keble, p. 175.

It is important to attend church on other days, too. "Holyday services should also be deemed a duty, and not thrown aside as non-essential when any trifling pleasure comes in the way." (Womankind, 78) In addition Miss Yonge recommends to her readers attendance at daily service. And lastly Fast and Feast days should be carefully observed.

In both this chapter on religion and in chapter 1 on woman's status, Miss Yonge writes with certainty. The Bible or Prayer Book are unquestionable sources of authority to support her beliefs. However in chapter 17, "Parents and Children," she adopts a different tone. The behaviour which she recommends is based on the fifth commandment, a principle which is secure for her but evidently somewhat out of tune with the current practice. Chapter 17 begins, "It seems a truism to say that the first duty is to parents, but in these days the fifth commandment is . . . much disused. . . ." (Womankind, 128) She acknowledges that there are many temptations not to honour parents as, for example, when parents have allowed liberties and indulgences and as a result "there has been no habit of submission." (Womankind, 128) The fault can lie with the parents but she recognizes "it is also the temptation of the age." (Womankind, 128) Counter to this temptation Charlotte Yonge begs children "most earnestly to let filial duty have the foremost place with them." (Womankind, 129) Difficulties may arise, as for example, when a mother's religious standard is "stricter than her daughter's, and yet narrower." (Womankind, 130) In this and in other difficult instances

Charlotte Yonge's guide remains the fifth commandment which she says it is incumbent upon the child to accept and perform. "There is nothing for it but that the young people should make it their strongest and most decided duty to bow to their parents' will." (Womankind, 131) She adds, "If the parents will not or cannot enforce it [obedience], still the children must pay it of their own accord." (Womankind, 131)

Despite her chapter title, the situations and suggestions as regards dutiful behaviour in this chapter are aimed not generally at children but at daughters, especially at the adult daughter. In this way she avoids many controversial areas of disagreement and can express herself with assurance. It is in the area of parents' commands that a clash of wills with the adult daughter is likely to occur. "When the parents, going on the principles held in their youth, shrink from dissipation for their children, and think certain amusements wrong, the daughter's duty is plain, whatever her convictions may be." (Womankind, 131) She must obey their restrictions. As it is with amusements so it is with intellectual subjects even if the parents object out of "prejudice." (Womankind, 132) In all cases the parents' interest must be attended to before the daughter's. "And when neither intellectual training, love of variety, nor even the calls of schools and poor can be attended to without neglecting the comforts and pleasure of elderly parents, the home duty is the prime one." (Womankind, 132)

Such a strict idea of the child's duty to her parents can also cause conflicts in the more serious areas of marriage and of religion. She advises that "A daughter's obedience does not compel her to marry where she does not love, but it does require her not to marry without her parents' consent, even when she has the legal power to do so." (Womankind, 152-5) In religious observances Miss Yonge wants it understood that even if there is disagreement, there is only one satisfactory solution. Some modern books suggest "rules that startle the minds of the elder generation," and if the child wishes to attend to these rules but the parents object it is certain that "obedience is better. . . ." (Womankind, 155)

For the daughter who marries, there is a different authority demanding obedience and a new set of duties. The role of "wife" for a woman begins with her marriage vow. That vow is to love, honour and obey her husband, and it is with a reminder of the vow of obedience that Charlotte Yonge begins chapter 22 on "Wives." She says, "The new lights contemn the vow of obedience. Some clergymen say that they find brides trying to slur over the word obey; and the advanced school are said to prefer a civil marriage because it can thus be avoided." (Womankind, 177) The objection to obedience arises from the new notion that woman is equal though different to man. But Charlotte Yonge remains faithful to the old teaching of inferiority and says that womankind is "still Christian enough to accept her lot . . . her husband must be the master, and . . . hers must be the second place." (Womankind, 177-8)

Charlotte Yonge discusses wives in this chapter by analysing four kinds of wives, the cowed-woman, the deadweight, the maîtresse-femme and the help-meet. It is obvious which one of these has her approval. "Of the cowed woman there is not much to say. Poor thing!" says Charlotte Yonge.

> She is a weak woman, married to a rough, hard, sneering, or violent man, so that her life is spent in trembling endurance, and endeavours to avoid exciting his anger towards herself or his children; often, too, in the piteously loyal attempt to conceal from her nearest and best friends that anything is amiss. (Womankind, 179)

In this situation the chief danger for the cowed woman is that she will be "driven into falsehood by her timidity" or through lack of spirit will acquiesce "in what she knows to be wrong. . . ." (Womankind, 179) By doing so she fails to live up to an honourable code of behaviour; she fails as an example to her husband and children; she fails to live the life of a true woman.

The life of a deadweight has its dangers, too. She is the wife who "cannot exist without a fond husband," (Womankind, 180) who gives in to her plaintive demands.

> She has generally been a selfish, spoilt child, and she goes on expecting everything to be done for her, and everything to give way to her convenience. She does not demand it in a loud or vehement way, but she just sinks down in despair with a soft and piteous glance, or a few plaintive words of submission to the direst consequences. (Womankind, 180)

A wife can be a deadweight physically or morally. In both instances she fails to exert herself and instead makes

"her husband the person to bear the brunt of everything, sparing herself instead of him. . . ." (Womankind, 182) The danger of this is that the wife will be responsible for making her husband "act against his own better judgement, and give up his plain duty." (Womankind, 180)

Through inaction both the deadweight and the cowed woman fail to be an influence to good. But the active direction of household and family affairs is not necessarily of itself a good thing. The maîtresse femme is an example of the misuse of an active policy. "She likes her own way, and will have it, getting it generally by perseverance in arguing, sometimes by giving way to temper, sometimes by sheer obstinancy and going her own way, sometimes by more subtle management." (Womankind, 182) She is an "obnoxious" wife who "governs with a high hand by force of vehemence and determination." (Womankind, 182) Against such determination a husband has no chance, "she generally gets him into capital order in a few years. . . ." (Womankind, 182)

The danger in this situation, Charlotte Yonge believes, is evident in the response of the children towards their mother for this is where the evil of usurping "God-given authority" (Womankind, 185) will show. "The children may be thoroughly kept in subjection, but they will have a sense of harshness, and will generally be found to have less love for such a mother. . . ." (Womankind, 185) The sons especially will suffer, "she cannot restrain her growing-up sons, who shake off the yoke when it galls, and over whom she has no tender influence of love; so

that people wonder why the family that seemed so well disciplined is turning out so ill." (Womankind, 183)

These three types of wives fail to exhibit the characteristics which a woman should exhibit. There are likewise, husbands who do not live up to the role which society expects of them. Miss Yonge discusses two special situations; when the husband, not the wife, is the "weaker vessel," (Womankind, 183) and when the "husband's tone of religious thought, and sometimes his principles and habits, are of an inferior kind to his wife's. . . ." (Womankind, 184)

In the first case Charlotte Yonge says,

> I believe that the really loving, good wife, never finds it out. She keeps the glamour of love and loyalty between herself and her husband, and so infuses herself into him that the weaknesses never become apparent either to her, to him, or to most lookers-on, and those who do perceive on which side lies the strength, respect her too much to betray their suspicions, nay, respect him too. (Womankind, 183-4)

This is the proper solution to the incorrect distribution of strength because "the right relation is kept up." (Womankind, 184)

When the husband is inferior to his wife as regards his principles and his religion, the situation is much more serious, for the wife. Charlotte Yonge says, "She sometimes has to suffer much in consequence, when he first begins to tire of the quiet life and lack of excitement at home." (Womankind, 184) Since the essays were written for womankind Miss Yonge directs her advice in this difficult situation to the wife and not the

husband. The wife, says Miss Yonge, should not "suspect her husband of being in mischief," (Womankind, 184) but rather should take a more positive approach. She should pray for strength and cheerfully "greet the truant without reproach or plaintiveness." (Womankind, 184) Accusations will drive her husband away whereas a pleasant home will win him away from his unsuitable friends or occupations.

Whatever the particular difficulty in her marriage, the important thing for a wife to remember is that "What the wife is, tells more than all her arguments. . . ." (Womankind, 188)

For the help-meet Charlotte Yonge has a noble but brief description. "Efficiency, sympathy, cheerfulness, unselfishness, and sweet temper: these are chiefly what go to make the real helpmeet wife." (Womankind, 188) A wife with these qualities need not necessarily be physically strong. "Even weak health or absolute invalidism need not disable her. . . ." (Womankind, 188) More than this, as far as advice or instruction is concerned, Charlotte Yonge has little to say. "The helpmeet with a true and superior lord of her heart and home is so happy and blessed a being, that I hardly dare say anything of or to her." (Womankind, 188)

It is not physical attributes or any other external characteristic which separates the acceptable wife from the unacceptable. Rather it is in the wife's knowledge, or lack of it, of her true self. The cowed woman must efface herself and cannot help her husband, the deadweight burdens her husband with herself, the maîtresse femme is

self-important. It is the help-meet who forgets herself and "even when she makes the utmost sacrifices," she does so "without seeking the smallest credit for it." (Womankind, 183) She alone achieves happiness and success as a wife.

The most important work for the wife is to provide a home for her husband and family. "Home" is the title and subject of chapter 30. "Home-making is perhaps the most essential of all the duties of womankind." (Womankind, 264) The chapter contains very specific advice as to how a woman, be she wife, daughter or sister can make a suitable home.

First the family needs a comfortable room in which to gather. Usually this room is the drawingroom which is "lived in and worked in, as well as used for visitors and for the evening place of assembly." (Womankind, 267) In this room the "lady of the house" (Womankind, 268) should be usually found for the convenience of her husband, children and callers. Charlotte Yonge would not have the furniture so new or the room so formal that children need to be excluded. On the contrary children can be taught at an early age to behave well. "Self-restraint and domestic courtesy are two great elements in home joy, and these, to be consistent with ease and freedom, must be acquired from the first." (Womankind, 268)

Another important place and time for children and parents to be together should be the diningroom at meal-time. Here the children experience the "quiet civilized life and superior society [that] is needed as they grow

older." (Womankind, 269) Mealtimes and other times of shared activity are important for a family.

> Nothing so binds a party together as some employment and interest in common, with which memories get associated, and round which hang family sayings and family jokes remembered long after. Thus, readings, music, and games are excellent means of gathering and keeping together the whole set in a way that is much safer and better for growing young people than when they retreat in parties of twos and threes to chatter in nooks in the schoolroom or smoking-room. (Womankind, 270)

These are the external arrangements which womankind directs in arranging home life.

One pattern of behaviour is conspicious by its absence in the discussion of home. Religious practices were very much a part of Victorian home life but in this chapter Charlotte Yonge does not make any mention of family prayers or Sunday observances. However, religious duties are not entirely overlooked and Charlotte Yonge gently but firmly reminds her reader of them when she says,

> But after all these are only external details. Nothing will really make a home but keeping the first and great commandment, and the second, which is like unto it. These alone can make happy homes of peace, and of innocent mirth, precious in thought to the very last breath. (Womankind, 271)

We have seen, thus far, that in her inferior position woman must be obedient to the authorities over her, religious and domestic. Yet within her home and her social milieu, womankind does exert a certain authority, subject to the guidance of her superiors, and it is this authority,

which is the subject of chapter 32.

Authority comes to womankind at some time during her lifetime. It comes to most women in consequence of marriage; it comes to the maiden woman or daughter as the result of sickness or death. Some women desire authority, "the vigorous among us long for this responsibility." (Womankind, 285) Some women fear it, but, "be it how it may, the time of responsibility does come, and we have to assume authority and to rule." (Womankind, 286)

Charlotte Yonge first directs her remarks to those women for whom authority is a "terrible effort." (Womankind, 288) Within her own sphere of influence a woman has much influence and responsibility and therefore Charlotte Yonge first suggests that assuming a strong position and demanding a proper recognition of place is very important. "To take the proper place, and exact due respect and obedience, may be very unpleasant, but is an absolute duty." (Womankind, 288) To demand such recognition is not wrong and does not err against humility. A "just estimate of our position and /of7 what is required of us," (Womankind, 289) is necessary when a woman must "undertake direction and management." (Womankind, 289)

To some women "authority comes naturally." (Womankind, 292) They have "strength of will and readiness of resource, power of execution and presence of mind" and for these women the exercise of authority "seems as spontaneous and easy as any other ordinary action of life." (Womankind, 292) For these women Charlotte Yonge has praise rather than advice.

> Her children's governess will be a better, braver, wiser woman for her influence; her servants one after another will grow into the ways of her household, and either remain training others, or go out to carry into other houses the benefits of the impression she has made on them; her neighbours will look to her for sympathy and advice, and follow her lead; her children's friends and guests will catch the tone and be the better for each visit,--and all this will be assuredly the effect produced by a sensible woman trying to do her duty in the best way possible to her, and to make all those with whom she is concerned as happy and as good as possible. (Womankind, 293)

Perhaps few women could fit her pleasing description. She says, "All of us are not born with good sense, and the best of us have to work out our own experience through a series of blunders and disappointments." (Womankind, 294) There will be vexations and disappointments from the people whom she tries to help and from those whom she thought supported her. She will make mistakes and be humbled. Woman must decide on questions where justice is not easy to see. But let a woman "take her place and do her duty in that state of life to which she is called," and she may have "an immense effect" for good. (Womankind, 297)

Woman's place is in the home, her duty is in the home and any good she might effect occurs in the home. The overwhelming importance of the home to Charlotte Yonge is reflected in the large number of domestic novels which she wrote and which will concern us for the remainder of the thesis. Many of the home situations in the domestic novels are complex and perhaps the dictates of duty and

obedience are not immediately apparent. In Womankind Charlotte Yonge gives examples of several possible difficult situations and her advice in such cases is to determine "where lies the essential" duty. (Womankind, 133)

Charlotte Yonge knew that it could be difficult to determine which was the essential duty and often difficult to obey the dictates of that duty. Moreover it was only by trying to understand and adhere to the notion of duty that persons could be capable of deciding the questions of what to do and whom to obey. The notions of duty and obedience provide the principles of behaviour and the domestic novels illustrate the application of those principles in a multitude of ways. In this manner Charlotte Yonge hoped to impress upon her readers the importance of the notions of duty and obedience in terms of the practical effect the notions might have upon their lives. She wrote nothing, we must remember, which was not intended to do good; and

> she added to her undoubted gift for descriptive and intelligent story-telling the far more important one of a passionate sincerity, an absolute belief in the supreme and fundamental importance of the principles she advocated and (the most effective form of advocacy) exemplified in the creatures of her imagination.[29]

[29] E. M. Delafield, "Introduction," in Charlotte Mary Yonge: The Story of an Uneventful Life by Georgina Battiscombe (London: Constable and Company, Ltd., 1943), p. 14.

iii

## Domestic Novels

Joseph Ellis Baker says, "The Victorian English left us, in the form of fiction, a picture of themselves more complete than any we possess for other nations or other generations."[30] We may take the fictional picture as a mirror of reality, he claims, because it was "presented by men of unquestioned honesty to a public too well acquainted with the subject to accept obvious misrepresentation. . . ."[31]

In the 1840's, a particular section of Victorian life became a popular subject for the Victorian reading public. The "picture of themselves" which the Victorians began to read with enthusiasm was a domestic picture, a picture of middle class family life. Professor Tillotson cites the publication of The Caxtons by Lytton as evidence that the new subject had become well established by the end of the decade.

> And when, for example, a prolific and popular minor novelist changes his groove, as Lytton did with The Caxtons in 1849, he testifies to the establishment of a major change in subject matter; from extravagant romance to domesticity, from the extremes of high and low life to the middle class.[32]

[30] The Novel and the Oxford Movement, p. ix.

[31] Ibid. See also Walter Houghton who says that one of the "chief glories" of the victorian age is "the intimate connection between life and literature." The Victorian Frame of Mind, p. xvii.

[32] Novels of the Eighteen-Forties (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), p. 5.

According to Dr. Baker the "vogue" for the domestic novel occurred "after Vanity Fair,"[33] which was published in 1848. Dr. Baker points out that Charlotte Yonge, when she first began to write novels, did not use the form which was used in the forties by the first decade of writers of Anglo-Catholic fiction but chose instead the new form, the domestic novel.

It might be thought that Miss Yonge was first and foremost a religious novelist. She had a deep dedication to the Tractarian point of view, even though Keble counselled her against religious discussion and controversy. The "religious novel" or rather the depiction of religion in novels was not unfamiliar to Victorian readers. "Religious novels chronicled faithfully the many skirmishes, truces, victories and defeats in those battles of belief waged in many 'individual minds and hearts' in the Victorian age."[34] Charlotte Yonge portrayed such matters in her novels so faithfully that Margaret Maison claims "as a chronicler of Oxford Movement influences on England's parish and family life she is invaluable. . . ."[35] But it is the home, not religion, which is the dominant feature of Charlotte Yonge's novels of contemporary life and they are therefore better termed domestic than religious. Baker says, "her primary object is to tell a story of domestic life, and a story in which character

[33] op. cit., p. 10.

[34] Margaret M. Maison, The Victorian Vision: Studies in the Religious Novel (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1961), p. 6.

[35] Ibid., p. 45.

is of much more interest than plot."[36] Baker and Maison use Miss Yonge's novels in their analyses of religious fiction, yet both recognize that her novels are primarily domestic. Margaret Maison says that Charlotte Yonge wrote "domestic novels of manners . . . /with/ interest in individual spiritual conflict. . . ."[37]

Novels of domestic manners portray customary ways of behaving in everyday life, and this, along with the middle class setting noted by Professor Tillotson loosely defines the domestic novel. Elizabeth Jenkins says of Charlotte Yonge that "Her best passages are entirely domestic, and much of her success lies in her lively receptive attitude to the texture of daily life, as it was lived by the comfortably off but well-ordered and disciplined middle-class."[38] We note in passing that the order and discipline derive from Charlotte Yonge's use of the notions of duty and obedience.

The scope of action of the domestic novel is indicated by Miss Yonge herself in her Preface to The Daisy Chain, a novel which portrays "home events, large and small" but not extraordinary incidents which happen only to a few.[39] She suggests, here, one of the chief attractions of the domestic novel, namely that the contemporary reader easily recognizes a reality the same as or similar to his own.

[36] The Novel and the Oxford Movement, p. 111.

[37] op. cit., p. 32.

[38] "Charlotte Yonge as a novelist," in A Chaplet for Charlotte Yonge, ed. Georgina Battiscombe and Marghanita Laski (London: The Cresset Press, 1965), p. 8.

[39] (London: Macmillan and Co., 1894), p. viii.

So popular did this kind of novel become, according to Richard Stang, that when "Wilkie Collins and his prolific followers" tried to "rise above /its/ flatness" their attempts were "roundly condemned as melodrama."[40]

Charlotte Yonge wrote some twenty-four novels[41] of middle class Victorian life which fulfill the conditions to be termed domestic novels.[42] This thesis examines sixteen of them, chosen to illustrate Miss Yonge's embodiment in fiction, at different stages of her writing career, of the notions of duty and obedience. The novels are classified according to the type of lesson in duty and obedience which, in the main, each novel aims to teach. There are lessons for young people, one lesson in courtship, lessons for women, lessons for adolescents with adult responsibilities and lessons for both adolescents and adults in a changed, late Victorian society. Within each chapter the novels are discussed in chronological order.

The novels which illustrate lessons for young people are Abbeychurch (1844), Henrietta's Wish (1850), The Two Guardians (1852) and The Castle-Builders (1854), They are all early novels and therefore give us a picture of

[40] The Theory of the Novel in England: 1850-1870 (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1959), p. 58.

[41] The exact number is difficult to determine because no one has yet published a complete bibliography of Charlotte Yonge's works.

[42] Omitted from this number are books written for children, because they do not deal with the responsibilities of adult domestic life, and books written about working class life.

middle-class Victorian life as yet untouched by the pressures and innovations which Miss Yonge was to record later on. In these early novels the situations in which Miss Yonge places her adolescent characters are relatively straight-forward, as are the lessons she is aiming to teach. The Heir of Redclyffe (1853) has as its central characters two young men and two young women and the lesson in this novel, more than in the others selected for discussion, pertains to adult male behaviour. The analysis of two differing courtships is an important part of the lesson in duty and obedience in this novel. The three novels chosen to illustrate lessons for women are drawn from three different decades: Heartsease (1854), The Clever Woman of the Family (1865), and The Three Brides (1876). They therefore reflect the changes over a period of years which Victorian society underwent, particularly with regard to woman's role, in the country parishes and small towns which Miss Yonge uses as her settings. Along with the depiction of a changing society The Three Brides shows how Miss Yonge failed to adapt her ideas about the dutifulness and obedience proper to women. The family chronicles are domestic novels which record the trials of adolescents who have important adult responsibilities owing to the death of a parent. To this category belong: Scenes and Characters (1847), The Daisy Chain (1856), The Pillars of the House (1873), Magnum Bonum (1879) and The Two Sides of the Shield (1885). Because these novels, like the novels embodying lessons for women, were written at different stages of Miss Yonge's

long career as a writer, they likewise reflect changes in Victorian society. In Miss Yonge's late novels she introduced, as mature men and women, some of the adolescent characters who had featured in her earlier novels. This last group of novels to be examined consists of Beechcroft at Rockstone (1888), The Long Vacation (1895) and Modern Broods (1900). In these late novels we witness the effects of a much changed society upon characters whose values, by and large, were formed during the mid-Victorian years. In the last chapter there is an overview of the effects of duty and obedience on Charlotte Yonge's domestic novels. The discussion takes up her success and failure as a novelist and shows the connection between the relative success of the novels and the notions of duty and obedience.

The domestic novels which are not discussed are excluded because of their generally poor quality. Some of them, such as My Young Alcides and Nuttie's Father, are so poor that they may have been published only because they were written by the author of The Heir of Redclyffe. In these very poor novels the stories are based on preposterous situations, rather than the common occurrences of domestic life which Miss Yonge excels in depicting, and although they attempt to extol dutiful and obedient behaviour, because of the situations they describe the lessons are hardly applicable to ordinary middle class existence.

Besides these very poor novels four others written during the fifties and sixties were also omitted because, although they have some of the characteristics of

Miss Yonge's most successful domestic fiction, on balance they are not successful novels. The four are Dynevor Terrace (1857), Hopes and Fears (1860), The Young Stepmother (1861), and The Trial (1865). In these four novels there is some very good characterization and dialogue. Miss Yonge uses her characteristic literary devices of a changed domestic situation and character development by means of erroneous behaviour, recognition of error and improvement. But the novels are poor because the stories do not keep pace with the moral lesson. Either the lesson fails to illustrate the benefits of the notions of duty and obedience or the story fails to sustain a single purpose and direction from beginning to end. These failures are also characteristic of the novels of her declining years. However the four mid-period novels were written at a time when Miss Yonge was capable of writing very well indeed, which is not the case with the later works. Therefore they have little significance except in so far as they indicate the uneven quality of her work and in consequence have been omitted from consideration.

# C H A P T E R  III

## YOUNG PEOPLE

### i

### Introduction

In Miss Yonge's early novels the wish to do good is obvious. So important was the moral lesson for Miss Yonge that in October 1852 she wrote a Preface to The Two Guardians in order to state and to stress the importance of the moral in her works. She wrote, "the author is anxious to say a few words on the design of these stories; not with a view to obviate criticism, but in hopes of pointing to the moral. . . ."[1] "These stories," to which she refers, are listed in the preface and they are, with one exception, the novels to be examined in this chapter: Abbeychurch (1844), Scenes and Characters (1847), Henrietta's Wish (1850), The Two Guardians (1852) and The Castle-Builders (1854). Scenes and Characters, in addition to being a domestic novel, has the characteristics of a group of Miss Yonge's domestic fiction known as the family chronicles and it will be discussed in the chapter which examines this group.

Each novel examines adolescent behaviour, assesses success or failure in terms of the degree to which a

[1] (London: Macmillan and Co. Ltd., 1899), p. v.

character acts dutifully and obediently, and illustrates a moral in the form of a lesson. Each novel has a sub-title which suggests the particular moral which is being taught. The subtitle for Abbeychurch is Self-Control and Self-Conceit. Miss Yonge remarks that Abbeychurch "is intended to show the need of self-control and the evil of conceit in different manifestations according to the various characters."[2]

In Henrietta's Wish Miss Yonge draws attention to two opposite forms of behaviour, "wilfulness and submission."[3] Domineering is the subtitle of the novel and it is this particular form of wilfulness and lack of submission which is examined.

The Two Guardians is subtitled Home in this World and the explanation which Miss Yonge gives for this is that the "story is intended to set forth the manner in which a Christian may contend with and conquer this world, living in it, but not of it, and rendering it a means of self-renunciation."[4] By "this world" Charlotte Yonge evidentally had in mind a domestic world such as the one which is both the setting of the novel and the "home" of the subtitle.

The fourth novel, The Castle-Builders, was written in order "to show the instability and dissatisfaction of

[2] The Two Guardians, p. v.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Ibid., p. vi.

mind occasioned by the want of a practical obedient course of daily life; with an especial view to the consequences of not seeking strength and assistance in the appointed means of grace."[5] The appointed means of grace is communion and in order to participate in communion, a member of the English Church must be confirmed. The many trials which befall the main characters and their inability to deal with them can be attributed to their failure to be confirmed and this moral is most clearly noted by the subtitle to the work, The Deferred Confirmation.

In addition to a rather obvious wish to do good, these four early novels share another characteristic. The main characters are adolescents or as Charlotte Yonge called them, "young people."[6] The young people are not children and not yet adults. Thus their obedience is still to parents and their duties are largely domestic. The concentration on characters still under the protection of parents reflects Charlotte Yonge's answer to her father when he questioned her about publishing Abbeychurch. She answered that she wished to do good to young girls like herself. There are more young girls in Abbeychurch than in the other novels but all four of them concentrate on the late teenage years. Charlotte Yonge was twenty-one years old when she so answered her father but we have seen in the discussion of Womankind that she believed that children still at home should put their parents interests

[5] The Two Guardians, p. vi.

[6] Ibid.

ahead of their own just as if they were still children.[7] The moral of each novel, however, is not confined to female behaviour. In each one Charlotte Yonge tries to illustrate "some principle which may be called the key-note,"[8] and which may be applied equally well to girls and boys.

ii

## Abbeychurch; or, Self-Control and Self-Conceit

The consecration of a church is Charlotte Yonge's means for drawing together a variety of young people in Abbeychurch (1844). The characters in this novel assemble at the home of the Rev. and Mrs. Woodbourne. The Woodbournes are a large family. The three eldest, Elizabeth, Katherine and Helen, were born to the first Mrs. Woodbourne who died when they were young. These three girls command the attention of the readers rather than the younger sisters and brothers who were born to the second Mrs. woodbourne.

Mr. Woodbourne has been responsible for building a new church in the rapidly growing town of Abbeychurch. To celebrate the consecration he has invited Lord and Lady Merton and their son and daughter, Rupert and Anne, to attend the ceremony. Lord Merton was the brother of

[7] See pp. 51-53

[8] The Two Guardians, p. v.

the first Mrs. Woodbourne. The other family invited to attend is that of Major and Mrs. Hazleby. The Major, who is brother to the present Mrs. Woodbourne, cannot attend but his wife and two daughters, Harriet and Lucy, arrive the day before the service. All the young people, Elizabeth, Katherine and Helen Woodbourne, Anne and Rupert Merton and Lucy and Harriet Hazleby are about the same age. They are out of the school room but not quite ready for adult life.

When the story opens Elizabeth, Katherine and Helen are discussing the consecration service and those who will attend it. Elizabeth, who is the most important character in the novel, is much involved in church activities and looks forward to this special service but she is indignant that the Hazlebys will attend. "But only think of Mrs. Hazleby, scolding and snapping for ever; and Harriet, with her finery and folly and vulgarity. And that at a time which ought to be full of peace, and glorious feeling. Oh! they will spoil all the pleasure!"[9] However Elizabeth does look forward with pleasure to the visit of her cousin Anne Merton who is her special friend; Anne's presence, she says, will "counteract some of the horrors of the Hazlebys." (Abbeychurch, 8)

Anne Merton too looks forward to the reunion with her cousins and she too is aware of the unfortunate aspects of Mrs. Hazleby's personality. But Lady Merton

[9] C. M. Yonge, Abbeychurch; or, Self-Control and Self-Conceit (London: J. & C. Mozley, 1872), p. 4. Hereafter all references to Abbeychurch in this chapter will be given with the title and page number in parenthesis after each quotation.

cautions her daughter not to mention her dislike to Elizabeth because she is "an excitable and impetuous creature" (Abbeychurch, 12) and likely to do harm if encouraged to see the Hazlebys as censorous. Lady Merton is portrayed as a sensible woman and her judgement of each of the three sisters is important. She indicates that Elizabeth lacks self-restraint, that Kate is merely a "good-natured gossip" (Abbeychurch, 13) and that Helen has a whining temper.

Also important is the advice Lady Merton gives to Anne, advice which brings out the theme indicated by the subtitle. She cautions Anne against "excitement and pleasure" which can "make you wild," and Anne replies, "Self-control! . . . Mamma, I am sure that 'Patient cautious self-control is wisdom's root,' must be your motto, for you are sure to tell me of it on every occasion." (Abbeychurch, 10).

Although it is the consecration of a new church which brings the characters together, Miss Yonge does not describe the service saying, "such thoughts and scenes are too high to be more than touched upon in a story of this kind. . . ." (Abbeychurch, 59) Some other events of the day, however, do merit description, There is a tea for the children of the parish in the afternoon and a dinner party at the vicarage in the evening. During the tea party Miss Yonge takes the opportunity to establish Elizabeth Woodbourne's good qualities. Elizabeth is everywhere helpful and there is much evidence of her good work in the parish. Elizabeth's less praiseworthy characteristics are in evidence during the evening. The

young ladies gather in the parlor for their tea while the adults dine. In the conversation which arises Elizabeth takes an exaggerated position, partly as a contrast to Harriet Hazleby's point of view, and she is led to make a number of foolish statements.

The next morning Anne, who is in the habit of confiding openly to her mother, recounts the conversation of the previous evening to her. Miss Hazleby, she says, "certainly did make a very ridiculous oration about officers and flirtations; but Lizzie, instead of putting a stop to it quietly and gently, only went into the other extreme, and talked about disliking all society." (Abbeychurch, 92) The sage Lady Merton gives a serious interpretation to the rather silly incident. "I am afraid she will make herself absurd and disagreeable by this spirit of contradiction, even if nothing worse comes of it." (Abbeychurch, 92) The "spirit of contradiction" is evidence of Elizabeth's lack of self-control and it is behaviour of this kind which later causes Elizabeth to err in obedience to her parents.

The adults of the Woodbourne household have been invited to dine out the day after the consecration. Thus the six girls (Rupert has still not arrived) are left alone without adult supervision. The girls become involved in an historical dispute and Kate suggests that the lecture to be given that very evening at the Mechanics Institute will settle the question.

Anne leaves the room for a few minutes. While she is gone Helen voices an objection to the plan, that "it is wrong for Church people to put themselves on a level

with Dissenters, or Infidels, or Socialists," (Abbeychurch, 125) but Lizzie is bent upon the pleasure of the lecture and when her sister will not heed her, Helen's argument deteriorates into a whining complaint. Unfortunately Helen's evidence originates from a discussion which took place while she was visiting friends at Dykelands. But Helen has too often talked of the perfections of Dykelands and the mere mention of the name is enough to rouse Lizzie's "spirit of contradiction." She will not pay heed to the sensible part of Helen's objection, and the one person who might have recognized its value, Anne, is out of the room during the discussion.

So when Anne returns all the girls prepare for the walk to the Institute. However, after walking part-way, Helen turns back and so does Lucy, and Helen explains that she does so in order to avoid hearing "foolish and wicked views" because "no subject can be safely treated of, except with reference to the Christian religion." (Abbeychurch, 131)

Elizabeth, Anne, Katherine and Harriet attend the lecture which is dull and pompous. This alone dismays Elizabeth but in addition she sees persons in attendance to whom her father objects.

The action of the rest of the novel concerns the consequences of the girls' attendance at the lecture, and with Rupert, Anne's brother, who arrives the same evening and takes advantage of the event to make mischief. Each of the young people has a different reaction to the wrong behaviour and from each one we learn part of the lesson in self-control and self-conceit.

That the consequences will be serious Kate realizes the next morning when she hears her father state his opinion of the Mechanics' Institute to Sir Edward Merton: "I disapprove of Mechanics' Institutes in general, and especially of the way in which this one is conducted, and . . I had resolved long before that none of my family should ever set foot in it." (Abbeychurch, 152) Kate "was on the point of speaking" which would have been the best course of action for her but she was "checked by an imploring glance from Harriet." (Abbeychurch, 152) Harriet from the beginning would hide the error from the adults; she is deceitful, and, by implication disobedient.

Kate and Harriet carry the news to Elizabeth who immediately determines upon a correct course of behaviour. She believes it is her duty to confess immediately. Harriet tries to persuade her not to, "I beg you will not," (Abbeychurch, 154) but Elizabeth is firm in her resolution and because her father is occupied she goes to confess to her mother.

Because the Hazleby's dog, Fido, disappeared during the walk to the Institute Harriet dreads questions from her mother and so she does not voluntarily approach her with the truth. Harriet's behaviour is therefore in direct contrast to that of Elizabeth. Lucy, of course, has nothing to confess but nevertheless Fido is missing and someone must tell Mrs. Hazleby. When their mother asks about him, Harriet escapes her presence on a pretext and Lucy is left bear the "snapping and scolding" (Abbeychurch, 4) which Elizabeth foretold. Helen is

grieved for her friend, Lucy. She too is innocent of blame but the incident serves to make her aware that her whining temper does not serve her well as when she was unable to persuade Lizzie about the Mechanics' Institute, and she resolves to "cure herself of the habit." (Abbeychurch, 177)

Elizabeth goes to her mother and in great humility relates the whole tale. Her mother would comfort her, "you could not know that it was wrong," but Elizabeth sees the source of the error, failure to behave according to the principle of obedience. "I did know that it was wrong to go out without asking your leave. Simple obedience might have kept me straight." (Abbeychurch, 159) The full relief from her sorrow, however, will not come until she has been able to confess to her father. Until she has this opportunity, Elizabeth remains miserable.

Katherine is neither deceitful like Harriet nor open and obedient like Elizabeth. Kate knows that attending the lecture was wrong but she avoids an interview with her mother. Kate behaves characteristically; she is good natured but will not confront her faults honestly. Whereas Elizabeth acted disobediently by not getting permission to attend the lecture it is implied that Kate is acting disobediently by not confessing to her parents.

Anne, who bares no responsibility for the incident, has already discussed the episode with her mother in one of their morning talks. She is neither guilty nor innocent of misbehaviour but her open confiding relationship with her mother offers an example of a correct

relationship between mother and daughter and in this way Anne's characterization contributes to the lesson in obedience.

In the meantime Rupert diverts the young ladies' attention from thoughts of the lecture. During a walk which the young people take, Rupert finds Fido drowned and he undertakes to tell Mrs. Hazleby of the loss of her pet. Rupert has a high opinion of himself which is shown to be self-conceit and he teases all the young ladies excepting Lucy who is too quiet for jest.

On Monday morning Mr. Woodbourne learns of the girls' folly but not from his daughters. He reads of their attendance at the lecture in the local newspaper. Elizabeth is with Mrs. Woodbourne when he comes to tell her of the story which he supposes to be erroneous. Elizabeth then sees an unexpected result of her disobedience. Her attendance seems to give her father's approval to the Institute. However Elizabeth finally has the opportunity to confess to her father. She takes all the blame upon herself, and she regrets the reflection on her father. "I have made it appear as if you had granted the very last thing you would ever have thought of; I have led Kate and Anne into disobedience. Oh! I have done more wrongly than I ever thought I could." (Abbeychurch, 235-6)

Mr. Woodbourne comforts Elizabeth. He sees that she is truly distressed, "I believe you are sincerely sorry for what has passed, and now we will do our best to make it useful to you. . . ." (Abbeychurch, 237) Mr. Woodbourne also talks to Katherine. Unfortunately, Katherine has not

chosen or is not able to realize the importance of what she has done and her behaviour shows that she is not truly sorry. First she tries to cast the blame elsewhere, "I should never have gone if it had not been for the others." (Abbeychurch, 236) Then she blames her bad memory because she did know beforehand of her father's disapproval. But her father does not comfort Kate because she tries "to defy my anger, and to laugh at the consequences of her giddy disobedience." (Abbeychurch, 238) Kate will not admit her faults, and her father "ordered her instantly to leave the room, and not to appear again till she could show a little more submission." (Abbeychurch, 239)

Of the three sisters, one did behave obediently and to her Mr. Woodbourne gives well deserved praise. "'Helen,' said he, 'Elizabeth tells me that you acted the part of a sensible and obedient girl the other evening, and I am much pleased to hear it.'" (Abbeychurch, 246) The words of praise are so highly valued by Helen that she was "too much overcome with delight and surprise to be able to speak." (Abbeychurch, 246)

A little while later the Hazlebys depart, Mrs. Hazleby still in ignorance of the difference in moral behaviour between her two daughters. There is no punishment for Harriet nor praise for Lucy but Mr. Woodbourne points to the damage which Harriet does to herself when he says, "I wish Miss Harriet joy of her conscience." (Abbeychurch 248)

The Merton family remains another day during which we see further evidence of Rupert's self-conceit. If Elizabeth is the most lacking of all the young people in

self-control, Rupert has the greatest abundance of self-conceit. Usually Rupert is "very good-natured" with his cousins except on occasions "when his vanity was offended." (Abbeychurch, 254) Unfortunately Lizzie offends his vanity by winning their chess match. Rupert "could not bear to be conquered" (Abbeychurch, 255) and he retaliates by drawing a humorous sketch of the meeting of the Mechanics' Institute. The allusion to her foolishness hurts Elizabeth's feelings more than Rupert realized it would. Lady Merton observes Rupert's display of vanity and sees that he "was really sorry that his wounded self-conceit had led him to do what he saw had mortified Elizabeth more than he had intended." (Abbeychurch, 256-7) He throws the sketch away.

Just before the Mertons leave Abbeychurch, Elizabeth and Anne visit the new church. Lizzie is sobered by thinking of the consecration and she reflects on her lack of self-control which caused so troubling an incident not only for herself but for her whole family and for their guests. As she looks at the alter, Elizabeth says to Anne, almost as a prayer, "may this affair at the Consecration be the last of my self-will and self-conceit, for indeed there is much that is fearfully wrong in me to be corrected, before I can dare to think of the Confirmation." (Abbeychurch, 260) Elizabeth has learned a very valuable moral lesson, she must trust to her parents judgment, she must be obedient to them and not to her own self-will. She has become aware of her faults and she desires to correct them. As far as the lesson of Abbeychurch is concerned Elizabeth can

learn no more. We leave Elizabeth in the church; the authoress comments, "we cannot take leave of Elizabeth Woodbourne at a better moment" (Abbeychurch, 260) in her development.

The action makes "a sudden transition to the conversation, which Anne had hoped to enjoy /with her family/ on the journey back to Merton Hall." (Abbeychurch, 260) This conversation serves to point up the moral of the tale; it is a kind of epilogue just as the opening two conversations served as a prologue.

The travellers analyse the behaviour of the young people while gathered together in Abbeychurch and find each one, with the exception of Lucy, guilty of lack of self-control and guilty of self-conceit to a greater or lesser degree. Rupert argues that Lucy is so quiet that it is hard to judge her behaviour but her forebearance under stress and her refusal to attend the lecture are evidence of her fine qualities of character.

The Merton family conclude that the story of the events in Abbeychurch may be seen as a lesson in self-control and self-conceit and so it should be, for Miss Yonge has made the object of her storytelling abundantly clear in her prologue, throughout the development of the story, in Elizabeth's last speech and in the epilogue. Lack of self-control and self-conceit lead to disobedience as well as all the other less important erroneous behaviour of the young people. The moral of the tale cannot escape the reader.

iii

## Henrietta's Wish; or, Domineering. A Tale

Three 'young people' take the most important roles in Henrietta's Wish; or Domineering (1850). Each of the three, Henrietta, her twin brother Fred and their cousin Beatrice, is guilty in some way of domineering. This is incorrect behaviour because it is the opposite of submissive obedience.

Henrietta and Fred Langford live in a resort town on the English coast with their mother, the widowed Mrs. Frederick Langford. The twins father died in a riding accident one week after they were born at the Langford ancestral home, Knight Sutton. Their mother has been in a nervous state ever since and has never returned to the scene of the accident. Some eighteen months before the opening of the novel her own mother died. Mrs. Vivian had not encouraged her daughter to visit the scene of her husband's death and in fact the twins, who are now sixteen years old, have never seen Knight Sutton.

At the beginning of Henrietta's Wish the possibility of their return is suggested; "there was a general impression throughout the family that now was the time for her [Mrs. Langford] to come amongst them again."[10] This possibility, which the twins both greatly desire, becomes a reality, but not without a great deal of

[10] (London: Macmillan and Co. Ltd., 1889), p. 3. Hereafter all quotations from Henrietta's Wish in this section will be followed by Henrietta and the page number in parenthesis.

encouragement from Henrietta. The twins and their mother journey to the Langford grandparents' home in order to celebrate Christmas together.

The moral lesson in Henrietta's Wish is not presented to the reader in quite so obvious a fashion as is the lesson in Abbeychurch. Yet the emphasis on domineering and its opposite form of behaviour, obedience, is always present. The consequences of both forms of behaviour become evident at Knight Sutton where the ensuing events show the strengths and weaknesses in each of the young people and thereby illustrate the lesson.

Just before the twins and their mother leave for Knight Sutton their uncle, Geoffrey Langford, takes the opportunity to tell Henrietta of the temptations of the new home and the responsibilities which will come to her:

> "One thing more before we leave this place. Whether Fred cheerfully obeys the fifth commandment in its full extent, may often, as I believe, depend on your influence. Will you try to exert it in the right way?"
>
> "You mean when he wishes to do things like other boys of his age," said Henrietta.
>
> "Yes. Think yourself, and lead him to think that obedience is better than what he fancies manliness. Teach him to give up pleasure for the sake of obedience, and you will do your work as a sister and daughter." (Henrietta, 68)

Fred's behaviour is so very important because his mother fears that he too will die in an accident and she has forced him to lead a life more sheltered than normal for a boy of his age.

As Uncle Geoffrey seems to predict, Mrs. Langford's restrictions on her son are more difficult for him to

bear at Knight Sutton than in his former home and the temptation to disobey is therefore very great. Temptation is largely provided for in the person of Fred's cousin Beatrice Langford.

Beatrice, nicknamed the Busy Bea, is a young person of energy and determination. Her delighful personality is attractive and she quickly adds Fred to her list of admirers. Beatrice is not pretty like Henrietta but she is nevertheless vain. The authoress openly criticises Bea for flirting with her male cousins while a group of them are decorating the church for the Christmas services. "Beatrice would have thought herself infinitely above it /flirtation/; but what else was her love of attention, her delight in playing off her two cousins against each other?" (Henrietta, 83)

Her "love of attention" and ability to manipulate her young cousins is both a flaw in her character for her to overcome and a source of serious difficulty for Fred. A relatively minor incident serves to illustrate the two drawbacks of Bea's vanity. One day, when the pond has frozen over, all the young people decide to skate. Mrs. Langford is afraid for her son's safety and she asks him to wait until Uncle Geoffrey declares the ice safe before he begins to skate. Henrietta and Fred watch the others from the sidelines because Uncle Geoffrey is delayed with business matters. Instead of ignoring Fred or sympathizing with his position, Bea taunts him until he can stand it no longer; he puts on his skates and joins the skaters. Bea has in fact encouraged Fred to be disobedient to his mother's command but instead of

remorse, she "felt all the time a secret satisfaction in the consciousness that it was she who made the temptation irresistible. . . ." (Henrietta, 113)

Beatrice is much to blame in this incident even though Mrs. Langford was unreasonable in her request. Her father, Uncle Geoffrey, takes the matter seriously. When Beatrice acknowledges that she tempted Fred she says in her own defense "but you know how easily I am run away with by high spirits;" and her father replies, "And I know you have the power to restrain them, Beatrice. You have no right to talk of being run away with, as if you were helpless." (Henrietta, 118) Uncle Geoffrey is willing to say no more on the matter to Fred or his mother but he tells his daughter what the principle of behaviour should be. "It is a great deal better for Fred that his amusement should be sacrificed to her peace, than her peace to his amusement." (Henrietta, 119)

The excuse of high spirits will not be acceptable for Beatrice after this incident because she has been warned as to the seriousness of her behaviour. Uncle Geoffrey says, "you know the greatness of the sin of disobedience, and the fearful responsibility incurred by conducing [sic] to it in others. Do not help to lead him astray for the sake of--of vanity--of amusement." (Henrietta, 121)

This warning does not serve to truly sober Beatrice or to modify her behaviour because "it was her mind, rather than her soul, that reflected and made resolutions" (Henrietta, 120) and so Beatrice is guilty of tempting Fred to disobedience once again.

Against her grandmother's wishes Beatrice plans an entertainment of charades for a party at Knight Sutton. She must have grey material and therefore needs to go into town. Transportation is a problem until Uncle Roger suggests that Fred drive her. Uncle Roger does not know that Fred has no real experience with horses and Bea rationalizes that Fred has not expressly been forbidden to drive.

All goes well until on the way home the old horse decides to return to his stable rather than to Knight Sutton which the young people desire. In his effort to control the horse Fred stands, is thrown out of the wagon and badly hurt. Bea is distraught, not only because of the seriousness of Fred's head injury but because of the circumstances of the accident. "And that Fred should be cut off in the midst of an act of disobedience, and she the cause!" (Henrietta, 178)

The seriousness of Fred's accident brings home to Beatrice that her self-willed behaviour and her domineering over others can have disasterous results. It is her soul and not her mind which is affected and she is humbled for the first time. When help comes and she returns to Knight Sutton with her injured cousin she takes the first possible opportunity to confess to her Heavenly Father:

> Beatrice threw herself on her knees as soon as the door had closed on her father, and so remained for a considerable time in one earnest, unexpressed outpouring of confession and prayer, for how long she knew not, all that she was sensible of was a feeling of relief, the respose of such humility and submission, such heartfelt contrition as she had never known before. (Henrietta, 210)

Hereafter Beatrice's behaviour is greatly modified. She does not try to put herself forward and she accepts the tasks which come to her rather than choosing her duties for herself. She is truly repentant and, helped by the Epiphany service, "a calm energetic spirit of hope, in the midst of true repentance, began to dawn upon her." (Henrietta, 216) When Bea is asked to relieve her mother's attendance on an elderly relative so that "Aunt Geoffrey" can come to Knight Sutton, Bea does not hesitate to take up what will be an unpleasant duty. Beatrice is reformed and evidence of this is her father's observation of her in her nursing task. He says, "Ever since the accident there has been a staidness and sedateness about her manner which seemed like great improvement, as far as I have seen." (Henrietta, 230) Her mother, too, is pleased with her improved manner which derives from her own conviction of her wrong and her desire to improve her behaviour.

Beatrice accepts a certain amount of blame for the accident which severely hurts Fred but it is Fred who is to blame for his own act of disobedience. Fred knows that he has never been taught to ride because his father was killed in a riding accident. Yet he takes the reins from Uncle Roger because he does not live by the principle of obedience. Fred is disobedient and, during his recovery, domineering towards his mother.

The temptation to show his "manliness" rather than obedience to his mother, which Uncle Geoffrey foresaw, begins almost immediately after the twins arrive at Knight Sutton. Fred finds that he is ignorant of country ways

but he is eager to join in all the activities which his cousins pursue. He is impatient of his mother's desire to restrict his activity. Once, when she calls him back from sport for lack of boots, he complains to his sister, "Do persuade mamma that I am not made of sugar candy." (Henrietta, 71)

Henrietta tries to have an influence on Fred, as Uncle Geoffrey desired, but at Knight Sutton it is Bea not Henrietta who holds Fred's attention and Henrietta's attempts are in vain. She is even unable to keep him from venturing on the ice.

Because Fred is already impatient of his mother's restrictions and because he has never consciously embraced the notion of obedience to his mother, her request is not strong enough to keep him from fulfilling his own desire. From the side of the skating pond Fred worries that he will "be made a fool in the sight of everybody" and thinking Uncle Geoffrey will never come he joins the other skaters. Fred's act of disobedience in this case is a deliberate one. "He made up his mind that Uncle Geoffrey was not coming at all, his last feeble hold of patience and obedience gave way, and he exclaimed, 'Well, I shan't wait any longer, it is not of the least use.'" (Henrietta, 112)

The consequences of Fred's disobedience do not at first seem to be very great. Uncle Geoffrey arrives moments later to certify the ice as safe. He is disappointed with Fred but does not have the opportunity to speak with him. However when the church bells ring for

a weekday service Fred ignores the call thinking that the others intend to do the same.

> He had never disobeyed a church bell before, and had rather not have done so now, but as he saw none of his male companions setting off, he fancied that to attend a week-day service in the holidays might be reckoned a girlish proceeding, imagined his cousins laughing at him as soon as his back was turned, and guessed from Uncle Geoffrey's grave looks that he might be taken to task when no longer protected by the presence of the rest. (Henrietta, 114-5)

Fred is mistaken; all the skaters hurry to the church, but Fred realizes this only when it is too late for him to catch up and arrive on time for the service. Thus Fred errs in disobedience twice, first to his mother and then to his Saviour. Both times he errs because he does not behave according to a principle but instead is concerned for the opinions of others. The underlying reason for the act of disobedience is important and the consequences of such behaviour will become serious.

The next act of disobedience on Fred's part is that he agrees to drive Beatrice into town knowing that his mother would be frightened by the knowledge of such an event.

> Fred's successful disobedience in the matter of skating had decidedly made him less scrupulous about showing open disregard of his mother's desires, and he answered /Bea's reference to his mother/ in a certain superior patronizing manner, "O, you know I only give way sometimes, because she does make herself so intensely miserable about me; but as she will be spared all that now, by knowing nothing about it, I don't think it need be considered." (Henrietta, 172)

Bea is somewhat hesitant but thinks that unlike the skating incident "no command had been given in this case," (Henrietta, 172) and so she assents, while on his part, "Fred's pride would never have allowed him to acknowledge that he felt himself unequal to the task he had so rashly undertaken." (Henrietta, 174)

Fred's rashness results in a serious head injury which requires constant nursing and medical attention. The injury is painful and Fred does not behave well as a patient. He is jealous of his mother's time and attention so that she overtaxes her strength caring for him. His demands are a form of domineering. As a patient Fred taxes the ingenuity of his family in their efforts to make him comfortable and help him recover. His behaviour shows that he lacks the command of himself which life up to this point has never required of him:

> His high spirits, excellent health, a certain degree of gentleness of character, and a home where, though he was not over indulged, there was little to ruffle him, all had hitherto combined to make him appear as one of the most amiable good-tempered boys that ever existed; but there was no substance in this apparent good quality, it was founded on no real principle of obedience or submission and when to an habitual spirit of quiet determination to have his own way, was superadded the irritability of nerves which was a part of his illness, when his powers of reflection were too much weakened to endure or comprehend argument; when, in fact, nothing was left to fall back upon but the simple obedience which would have been required in a child, and when that obedience was wanting, what could result but increased discomfort to himself and all concerned? (Henrietta, 208)

All during the first weeks of his recovery Fred is too ill to understand how close he is to death. But during his convalescence he suffers a relapse as the result of going against the doctor's orders and eating some of his grandmother's wine jelly. Immediately he feels worse and thereby percieves how near to the grave he had been brought." (Henrietta, 251) This awareness startles Fred to both the enormity of his act of disobedience and also to the "spirit of self-will" which initiated it and with which he persists.

> A deep shuddering sense of awe came over him, as he thought what it would have been to die then [just after the accident], without a minute of clear recollection, and his last act one of wilful disobedience. And how had he requited the mercy which had spared him? He had shown as much of that same spirit of self-will as his feebleness would permit; he had been exacting, discontented, rebellious, and well indeed had he deserved to be cut off in the midst of the sin in which he had persisted. (Henrietta, 251)

The result of this realization is that Fred tries to improve his behaviour. He becomes a better patient and he vows for the future that he will "make up to her for all that he had caused her to suffer for his sake." (Henrietta, 252) While he recovers, however, it is difficult for Fred to carry out his good intentions toward his mother because her health has declined as a result of her anxious care of him, and she is confined to her room. "It was very disappointing that, at present, all he could even attempt to do for her was to send her messages--and affection does not travel well by message,--and at the same time to show submission to her known wishes." (Henrietta, 252)

The opportunity to make amends to his mother in the future is denied to Fred. Mrs. Langford's health declines so greatly that Fred realises his mother will die. He recovers sufficiently before her death in order to have one last visit with her. At their reunion both mother and son feel "a quiet sense of excessive happiness" (Henrietta, 260) and after some conversation Fred asks for his mother's forgiveness. "I will not say I have nothing to forgive," she answers, "for that is not what you want; but well do you know how freely forgiven and forgotten is all that you may ever feel to have been against my wish." (Henrietta, 263)

One positive result of Fred's disobedience is that he has determined to reform his behaviour. Fred is changed for the better. In addition, although the demands of nursing Fred bring on the final attack from which she dies, Mrs. Langford has been ailing for many years and Fred is not responsible for the presence of her disease. Then, too, we must remember that it is Henrietta's wish which brings Mrs. Langford and her children to Knight Sutton and therefore to the scene of the disaster. Thus Henrietta must bear some of the responsibility for the events which occur there.

From the beginning of our acquaintance with her, Henrietta is dissatisfied with her home at Rocksand; "it never was meant to be a home, and has nothing home-like about it!" (Henrietta, 7) Even though there is a "general impression throughout the family" (Henrietta, 13) that Mrs. Langford and her children should return to Knight Sutton it is Henrietta who takes every opportunity

to promote the idea. Mrs. Langford is not averse to the idea but her health is not strong and the possibility of return causes her some pain. Henrietta justifies her pressure by saying to Fred, "I do think we may persuade her, and I think we ought: it would be for her happiness and for yours, and on all accounts I am convinced that it ought to be done." (Henrietta, 8) Henrietta's wish becomes disobedience because she takes it upon herself to decide what is best for her mother rather than to wait obediently for her mother's decision. "'If I was not fully convinced that it was right, and the best for all parties, I would not say so much about it,' said Henrietta [to Fred], in a tone rather as if she was preparing for some great sacrifice, instead of domineering over her mother." (Henrietta, 14)

When Mrs. Langford finally agrees to the plan she admits that their return is the right course of action. "I know it is right, and it shall be done." (Henrietta, 25) Mrs. Langford admits that "Knight Sutton is our true home, the one where it is right for us to be." (Henrietta, 31) Yet the fact that Henrietta has brought about the return to Knight Sutton by domineering places her in the wrong as regards the fifth commandment even though the action may ultimately be correct. This is the lesson of Henrietta's Wish, and the authoress interrupts the story to state Henrietta's fault and to imply its universality. "It was in honour, not in love, that Henrietta was wanting, and with how many daughters is it not the same?" (Henrietta, 66)

The return to their birth place is joyful for the twins but Henrietta becomes aware of her mother's suffering and it is hinted that Henrietta and Fred are not as happy as they expected to be. "And after all, in the attainment of their fondest wish, were Henrietta and Frederick as serenely happy as she was?" (Henrietta, 74) Henrietta is attentive to her grandparents and thereby pleases her mother but she is unable to influence Fred and she misses the closeness which they had hitherto shared.

During the first part of their Christmas vacation Henrietta is not subject to temptations as is Frederick nor does she have much opportunity to domineer over her mother. Fred's mishap, however, proves to be a great trial for Henrietta and her behaviour shows that she too lacks the principles of behaviour which would help her to bear up under great stress.

There is great suspense at Knight Sutton when the family has news of Fred's fall but do not know how seriously he is injured. As they wait for him to be carried to the house Henrietta suffers an "ecstasy of sorrow." (Henrietta, 188) She dearly loves her brother and she is unable to control her grief and thereby shows both her selfishness and her lack of self-control.

> In such a dreadful interval of suspense, her conduct was, perhaps, scarcely under her own control; and it is scarcely just to mention it as a subject of blame. But, be it remembered, that it was the effect of a long previous selfishness: and self-will: quiet, amiable selfishness: gentle, caressing self-will; but no less real, and more perilous and deceitful. But for this, Henrietta would have thought

> more of her mother, prepared for her comfort, and braced herself in order to be a support to her. . . . (Henrietta, 189)

When her injured brother does arrive Henrietta is too distraught to be of much use and she carelessly rebuffs Bea who is so badly in need of comfort.

Fred is well cared for and Henrietta should see that her duty is to care for her mother, but she attends to this duty only as it suits her. In addition Henrietta refuses to see that her mother's health is declining, even when Fred all but tells her that she is dying. When Mrs. Langford does finally die Henrietta is not at all prepared for this second grief. Again she is uncontrollable, giving way to her own grief in a selfish way because she takes no heed for her brother's grief.

> Henrietta was completely unmanageable, only resting now and then to break forth with more violence; and her sorrow far too selfish and unsubmissive to be soothed either by thought of Him who sent it, or of the peace and rest to which that beloved one was gone; and as once the anxiety for her brother had swallowed up all care for her mother, so now grief for her mother absorbed every consideration for Frederick; so that it was useless to attempt to persuade her to make any exertion for his sake. (Henrietta, 277)

Henrietta is so selfish in her grief that she refuses to visit Fred or even to leave her room because by doing so she must necessarily pass by the door to her mother's bedroom. Her behaviour is another form of domineering, of forcing others to give in to her desires. The situation is intolerable and Uncle Geoffrey takes it upon himself to chastise Henrietta. "You have been nursing up your grief and encouraging yourself in murmuring and repining,

in a manner which you will one day see to have been sinful: you are obstinate in making yourself useless." (Henrietta, 282)

Uncle Geoffrey leaves Henrietta's room but she follows him into the hallway and in her haste to explain she finds that she has passed the dreaded door. In a few minutes she sees Fred who has spent time since their mother's death marking passages in books of prayer and poetry which he thinks will comfort her. Such kindness and consideration shame Henrietta. "It was the first time she had ever been conscious of her own selfishness, or perhaps more justly, of her proneness to make all give way to her own feeling of the moment." (Henrietta, 285).

Humbled by her interview with Fred, Henrietta begins to reflect on her life. She soon takes the opportunity to make amends with Bea, "you must let me thank you for having been very kind to me this long time past, though I am afraid I showed little thankfulness." (Henrietta, 288-9) Henrietta reflects on the behaviour which was responsible for bringing her mother and Fred to Knight Sutton; "it was my determination to come here that seems to have caused everything, and that is the thought I cannot bear." (Henrietta, 290)

Neither Henriettamor Fred actually accept full responsibility for their mother's death. That indeed would have been a heavy burden to bear. Mrs. Langford's "complaintwas of long standing," (Henrietta, 291) and we remember that once she decided to return she was happy

and believed it the right decision. Uncle Geoffrey counsels the twins "against reproaching ourselves with consequences." Although many of their actions were disobedient, they "ought to think of the actions themselves, instead of the results." (Henrietta, 290) Fred comforts his sister by saying, "if you did domineer over her, it was very wrong, and you may be sorry for that; but that you must not accuse yourself of doing all the mischief by bringing us here." (Henrietta, 291)

The most important result of Henrietta's wish is that Henrietta gives up domineering, "I think I shall never wish again, or care for my own way." (Henrietta, 292) It is only after her death that Mrs. Langford's children truly obey her, by doing as they know she would desire, "as long as we do what she wished, we are still obeying her." (Henrietta, 292) An epilogue tells us of the later years in the twins' lives in order to show that they are both reformed and dutiful people although for Henrietta "with the fair peaceful image of her beloved mother, there was linked a painful memory of a long course of wilfulness and domineering on her own part." (Henrietta, 295)

In Henrietta's Wish Miss Yonge teaches a lesson against domineering and for obedience, as required by the fifth commandment, in three different ways. Beatrice tries to domineer over everyone in order to get her own way. Because she goes ahead with charades against her grandmother's desire, she helps to cause Fred's accident. Fred domineers because in his illness he is not submissive to treatment nor does he spare his mother from hours of

anxious nursing and thereby weakens her so that an attack of spasms is fatal. And Henrietta domineers because she takes it upon herself to determine what is best for her mother rather than being obedient to her mother's desires. Each of the three young people acts from selfish motives rather than from principle and each must understand his or her fault before a lesson in behaviour can be learned and reform achieved.

iv

The Two Guardians; or, Home in This World

The first chapter of The Two Guardians (1852) introduces the reader to two young people, Marian and Gerald Arundel and to their cousin Edmund Arundel who is an adult. The Arundels have a happy home life and they love the beautiful Devon countryside where they live. In the next chapter, set some months later, the two young people have become orphans; their father and mother having both died. They are left to the care of two guardians; one is their cousin Edmund who is as a brother to them, and the other is a relative of their mother's, Mr. Lyddell, whom they do not know. Mr. Lyddell does not make a good impression on the orphans but they must go to live with this less congenial of their two guardians because he has an established home and family and can accommodate the orphans whereas Edmund has no home, no family and no income with which to care for them.

The contrast between the two guardians is great. Not only is Edmund a childhood friend to the two young people but his moral values are strict and in sympathy

with those of the orphans. Mr. Lyddell and his family, on the other hand, are very much in society and we learn quickly that their values are worldly, their principles not strong. The contrast is most carefully noted when Mrs. Wortley, the wife of the vicar in the Arundel's parish, asks Edmund, "How are they /the Lyddells/ as to Church principles?" and Edmund answers, "I should think they troubled themselves very little about the matter and would only dislike anything strong either way."[11]

The first morning after their arrival at the Lyddell family home Marian hears a bell which she believes summons the family to prayers. But she is mistaken. It is the breakfast bell. The Lyddells do not pay much attention to prayer or church ordinances and these outward signs of neglect are indicative of their inner lack of principles and faith.

Marian, who is the most important character in the novel and who constantly engages the reader's attention, is not immediately happy in her new home. She is shy and highly principled and these characteristics seem to keep her apart from the Lyddell children. Unlike the young people in Abbeychurch and Henrietta's Wish, Marian Arundel begins her time of trial and temptation with strict principles of behaviour, principles which she attempts to live up to in spite of the temptations of

[11] C. M. Yonge, The Two Guardians, p. 24. Hereafter all quotations from this work in this chapter will be followed by Guardians and a page number in parenthesis.

her environment. Edmund advises her that her "conduct should be a witness to your better principles." (Guardians, 105) Marian has a highly developed sense of what is right and wrong, she is a "witness of the truth" (Guardians, 443) and the lesson of The Two Guardians illustrates how Marian is able, in her own shy and submissive manner, to accept uncongenial duties and to influence to the good those around her.

Besides Mr. and Mrs. Lyddell, there are six Lyddell children. Elliot the oldest, is not only unprincipled but dissipated. He lives away from the family home and engages little of the reader's attention. The next in age is Walter, a shy young man who is a clergyman in a large industrial city. Caroline and Clara are about the same age as Marian, and, at the beginning of the story, the three girls as well as Lionel and Johnny, the youngest Lyddell children, and Gerald Arundel are under the supervision of a governess.

Although the children are at first repelled by Marian's extreme shyness, with time the three girls become companions if not close friends. Caroline is more serious than her sister and as the years pass Caroline and Marian grow to be good friends. Caroline is, in fact, one person on whom Marian exerts a great moral influence. Marian's influence begins in the schoolroom. Caroline tells her,

> "You always kept order, after you came."
>
> "O, Caroline, what nonsense!"
>
> "Yes, indeed you did. I do assure you that, scores of times, the knowledge that your great eyes were wondering at me has kept me from bullying Miss Morley

> into letting me do what I knew to be wrong. I could persuade her and deceive myself, but I could not persuade you; and then all the rest went for nothing, because you were sure to be right." (Guardians, 191)

Caroline is able to be influenced by Marian because she recognizes Marian's moral superiority. Yet there are other influences in Caroline's life and they stem from her family, their position and wealth. When the girls become older there is a great contest in Caroline between the two sets of principles, her parents' which are worldly, and Marian's which are other worldly.

When the family is in residence in London, Marian dines frequently at the home of her cousin Lady Selina Marchmont. She meets there a Mr. Faulkner who is looking for an estate to buy and, as we learn later, a young lady to marry. By the time this occurs Marian is still young but of marriageable age; but Marian is repulsed by Mr. Faulkner because he is not a Churchman. Lord Marchmont says in criticism of Mr. Faulkner that he has taken up "Germanism."[12] (Guardians, 157) For Marian, therefore, Mr. Faulkner can have no redeeming qualities. "Marian has some notion that Germanism meant that the foundations of his faith were unsettled, and she looked extremely horrified. . . ." (Guardians, 157) This is one example of the strict line of right and wrong which Marian draws when judging the behaviour of those around her.

[12] The conservatives in the Church of England were afraid of German Biblical Scholarship because it questioned and seemed to attack the literal truth of the Bible. Germanism was a term used to define that area of thought which questioned the literal truth of the Bible. See Chadwick, The Victorian Church, I, 530.

However, it transpires that Elliot Lyddell brings Mr. Faulkner to the Lyddell home in the country for a visit while Mr. Faulkner looks for an estate to purchase. He seems to favour Caroline's company and Caroline enjoys his. Her family also encourage the growing attachment between the couple because of Mr. Faulkner's wealth on which they place a great value. On her part Marian warns Caroline of the danger of an unprincipled man: "Caroline, for a man's faith to be unsettled is the worst of all, for then there is nothing to fall back on." (Guardians, 204)

In a short time Mr. Faulkner purchases a nearby estate and is joined by his mother and sisters. An intimacy is quickly established between the two families which further draws Caroline toward an engagement with Mr. Faulkner. The Faulkners also encourage the intimacy. To help bring the couple together they plan a large garden party and ball with an archery competition among several young ladies in costume as the highlight of the afternoon. Marian is asked to be one of the number competing for a silver arrow but she refuses to participate in front of spectators.

The situation is complex. Marian does not wish to spend money for a costume or to make a public display of herself. On the other hand her dislike of the Faulkners is established and may be her underlying reason for refusing to participate. The question is where does her duty lie and what is the right principle of behaviour. Caroline pleads with Marian to yield, "if you do not really think it a matter of right and wrong, I should be very much obliged to you if you would only yield."

(Guardians, 235) Because she does not yield a coolness develops between the two girls.

Marian does wrong by refusing to yield to Caroline's plea. Edmund, who attends the ball, helps her to see her error when he says, "Everything in this world is nonsense /like an archery competition/, except as a means of doing right or wrong." (Guardians, 252) For Marian, because she was acting "contrary to every one's wishes" she was showing "selfwill" rather than self-sacrifice, and therefore her decision was wrong. (Guardians, 253)

Marian's decision has important consequences. "Marian had done infinite mischief by the severity which had weakened the only home influence excepting Walter's which held Caroline to the right." (Guardians, 263) For Caroline does wrong. During the ball Mr. Faulkner proposes marriage to her. She is undecided at first but because of prearrangements she and Clara spend the night at the Faulkner's estate whereas Marian returns to Oakworthy with the Lyddells. If Marian had been in the archery competition she too would have been an overnight guest and therefore present in order to help Caroline do what is right. Caroline later laments, "O, Marian! if you had but been with me that morning." (Guardians, 328) It is during the morning when both families encourage her that Caroline errs by accepting the proposal.

Caroline's engagement is an unhappy time for both girls. Caroline knows that Mr. Faulkner is not religious and "her better principles warned her against him" (Guardians, 264) but she likes him even if she is not

sure that she loves him. In this instance Caroline has succumbed to worldly influence, because "her standards had been lowered" (Guardians, 264) by her family and because Marian was absent at the crucial time.

Evidence of Mr. Faulkner's Germanism and therefore by implication of his lack of Christian principles comes from Lionel who overhears Mr. Faulkner and Elliot discuss the Bible.

> "I do declare, Marian, he was worse when he began to praise it than he was before; for he talked of the Old Testament as if it was just like the Greek mythology, and then he compared it to Homer, and Æschylus, and the Koran. To be sure he did say it was better poetry and morality; but the idea of comparing it! I don't mean comparing as if it must be better, but as if it stood on the same ground." (Guardians, 278)

Thus by engaging herself to an infidel we are to understand that "Caroline was weakly, wilfully doing wrong." (Guardians, 298)

Marian never expresses any happiness about the engagement and so the contrast is very great when she is obviously overjoyed to learn that her other guardian, Edmund Arundel, soon after he inherits a fortune, becomes engaged to her best friend, Agnes Wootley, the daughter of the vicar in her childhood home. Caroline is especially aware of the contrast and she becomes more and more "wretched." (Guardians, 326) She is again drawn to Marian and spends many hours talking with her but all Marian will suggest is that she write to her brother Walter, who as a clergyman is the proper person to advise her.

Walter helps Caroline to see that it would be wrong to marry Mr. Faulkner and Caroline resolves to break the engagement. But the decision causes her great suffering. Marian tries to comfort her. "Indeed, indeed I am quite sure, though I don't understand it all, or see the way, that if you will but bear it rightly, you will be glad, if not before, yet at least when you die, even of this terrible affliction." (Guardians, 305) The affliction is indeed great. Mrs. Lyddell especially is furious, as is Elliot, and Mr. Faulkner shows himself to have been genuinely attached to her. Marian does not quite understand the cost to Caroline of parting with her fiancée even though the action is morally correct. She says, "It is so glorious to have something to suffer for the sake of doing right!" (Guardians, 343)

Instead of marriage Caroline determines to devote herself to Lionel who is slowly going blind. But her noble self-sacrifice will not be carried out for influenza strikes the household and Caroline alone dies. Marian sees victory in Caroline's life and death: "She had all the world before her, and she chose vexation and trouble instead of doing wrong!" (Guardians, 405)

Both when she decided to give up Mr. Faulkner and when she lay dying Caroline requested that her brother come to Oakworthy. Thus Caroline's decision and death have an unforeseen result. Because the advice and presence of a clergyman is so important to Caroline and to Marian, a change comes over Mr. Lyddell in his regard for the clergy and church principles. As token of this change, he asks Walter to say nightly prayers.

> A moment more and the servants came in, all were kneeling, and Marian's tears of thankful joy were streaming fast as Walter read an evening prayer. Was not Caroline glad? was the thought, as she recollected that first morning, when all had seemed to her childish mind so dreary and unhallowed, and when Caroline had lamented the omission. (Guardians, 407)

Although Marian failed Caroline in one instance, her overall influence has been for the good and Caroline dies without the stigma of engagement to an unprincipled person.

Caroline is not the only person in the Lyddell household whom Marian influences to good. Yet Marian is not aware that she is an influence in other people's lives. She is intent only on living up to her own church principles and not on persuading others to live according to them. Yet this is what her daily example achieves, and it is evident in another of the Lyddell children, Lionel, who "learnt from her to reverence goodness, and cleave to the right. . . ." (Guardians, 281)

Marian's influence over Lionel is important because during the time when Caroline is suffering from the effects of her engagement, the Lyddell family learn that Lionel's eyesight is in danger. At first there is hope. But with the slim hope Lionel has difficulty resigning himself to a restricted life and he looks to Marian "to help him through this sad autumn of uncertainty." (Guardians, 319) The hope proves to be false. However, with Marian's example of submission to the events of life, Lionel learns to accept his blindness and to bear

no feelings of malice towards his parents who ignored the first signs of danger.

Lionel's blindness is a kind of trial for Marian, too. Edmund Arundel builds a home for his bride. He reminds Marian of the promise which he made to her after her parents' deaths, that when he should marry he would make a home for her. But, dislike Oakworthy as she does, Marian cannot overlook Lionel's reliance on her or Clara's dependence on her in domestic matters because Mrs. Lyddell has been invalided from shock.

> She thought of the home that awaited her at Fern Torr, the hope that had carried her through last autumn, but withal came a dim vague perception that a great sacrifice might be before her. Would it be right to seek her own happiness and repose there, and leave the Lyddells in their present distress? (Guardians, 423-4)

Marian does have ties to the Lyddell family. Although Clara is not a companion or friend as Caroline was she depends upon Marian for advice and help with the care of her mother who does not recover from the shock of Caroline's death. Lionel too depends upon Marian for companionship and many small services such as reading and horseback riding. And there is her long association with the family whose times of grief and joy she has shared. Thus "Marian was becoming more and more a prey to that secret doubt, whether it might not be a duty to give up her cherished hope of a home at Fern Torr." (Guardians, 427) Marian believes that she could do much good in her own home village, "I should go to school, read to the poor people, go to church in the week, be more improved myself." (Guardians, 429) But this would mean leaving

her other, albeit less congenial, duties. "I must not deceive myself; I have been put in the way of positive duties here, or rather, ways of being useful have grown up round me. Is it right to run away from them--poor Lionel, poor Clara?" (Guardians, 429)

Marian comes to believe that the answer to her question is that it is not right to run away from her duties with the Lyddells. As a proof of her decision to remain with them, Marian accepts several responsibilities which occur as Mr. Lyddell runs for re-election to Parliament. Mrs. Lyddell is still unwell and Clara incapable of carrying out some obligations to entertain which arise. However by accepting these duties Marian must miss Edmund and Agnes' wedding. "Not one of the whole family guessed that to them was sacrificed the most treasured project of Marian's life." (Guardians, 435) The statement refers specifically to the wedding but it applies equally well to the opportunity to live with Agnes and Edmund.

At the end of the novel Marian chooses as her Home in This world the very place which, at the beginning, she was afraid to go to. By accepting the duties which came to her unbidden Marian has learned self-renunciation, and by holding to her own principles of behaviour in the Lyddells' worldly home she has learned to live in, but not of, the world.[13] An unexpected result of her time of trial is that her influence has been very great.

[13] See page 51.

Edmund comments,

> "Trouble has done much for those Lyddells, but I don't believe that without her it would have had that effect. When I remember what Mr. Lyddell was, his carelessness, the painful manner in which he used to talk; when I see him now, when I think of what that poor Caroline was saved from, when I see the alteration in Clara, and watch that blind boy, then I see indeed that our little Marian, whom we thought thrown away and spoilt, was sent there to be a blessing. If she had been naturally a winning, gentle, persuasive person, I should have thought less of the wonder; but in her it is the simple force of goodness, undecorated." (Guardians, 443)

To accept home duties as they come must thus be called the lesson of the novel. For Marian the dictates of her duties are difficult, even uncongenial, but she does not shirk them. There is no reward for such a sacrifice. To show reward would have been unrealistic. Instead we leave Marian "like a witness of the truth" (Guardians, 443) in the home she has chosen.

## V

## The Castle-Builders; or, The Deferred Confirmation

The Castle-Builders (1854) begins on the day when Emmeline and Katherine Berners are examined and passed for confirmation. Emmie and Kate are sisters who attend Miss Danby's boarding school in London while the rest of their family lives in India. The two girls and their older sister, Constance, who is now married, were sent home to England when very young and so they have not seen their mamma, their step-father nor the young step-brothers and sisters born in India since their departure. The girls

dream of their absent family. Emmie especially imagines happy home situations, "castles," in place of their present life: "Oh! but to have Mamma and the children, that would be happiness enough anywhere!"[14] Kate is a willing listener to her sister's imaginings: "Emmeline was a most magnificent and unbounded dreamer, and Kate had implicit faith in her castles. . . ." (C-B., 11)

The girls have some doubts about their confirmation. They question whether they are good enough to be confirmed. Lady Francis, a relation now that Constance has married her brother, Lord Herbert, tries to allay their fears by saying, "It is a means, not the reward, of goodness." (C-B., 6) But the girls are still somewhat hesitant. They wish that their new brother-in-law, Lord Herbert, who is a vicar, was in England so that he could answer their questions. However Constance and Herbert are in Italy for the benefit of Lord Herbert's health and so that dream is unrealized.

Life for the two sisters changes abruptly. Their step-father and mother, Sir Francis and Lady Willoughby, return unexpectedly from India. The girls learn of their presence when Sir Francis comes to the school. In the excitement of the reunion and of leaving school the two girls miss the confirmation service. It is not convenient, they rationalize, to return to school to retrieve the necessary tickets which have been left behind by mistake. They do not think the omission is serious:

[14] C. M. Yonge, The Castle-Builders; or, The Deferred Confirmation New Edition (London: A. D. Innes and Co., 1898), p. 4. Hereafter all quotations from this work in this chapter will be followed by C-B. and a page number in parenthesis.

> "But we will take care we do not miss church next Sunday," said Emmeline, as if to atone for the rest by this one good resolution.
>
> "And we will get our books from Miss Danby's, and read our Christian Year every Sunday, as we promised Constance," said Kate. (C-B., 41)

The girls clearly do not perceive the importance of confirmation and now that it has once been deferred, the actual ceremony will not take place until its importance has been impressed upon both sisters.

Indeed the importance of confirmation and the strength for the duties of daily life which communion affords is the lesson which The Castle-Builders teaches. Because they are not confirmed the girls are led to engage in aimless and undutiful behaviour.

> She [Emmie] did not perceive how the grace therein received [in Confirmation] might have strengthened her on her entrance into the new sphere of trial and duty in which she had been placed. Emmeline and Kate did indeed know that life is a time of trial, but they did not feel it; they were drifting quietly on the stream, without much thought of the course; and though they acknowledged the necessity of attending to Church ordinances, these were to them duties in themselves, which stood alone, unconnected with practical life, and without influence over it. So, as Confirmation was to come but once in their lives, why not at one time as well as another? And the thought of the Holy Communion made them still more inclined to defer it, since they would be afraid to stay away and yet dreaded to go on without due preparation. They did not feel with their hearts, though in some degree they knew with their misunderstandings, that prayers, Church services, Confirmation, Communions, were all steps to lead them on in the track of daily life, the way-marks set about their path; nay, further the wings which might bear onwards their steps. (C-B., 42)

The "new sphere of trial and duty" which comes to the girls is not at all like their dream of being reunited with their family. "The first rose-coloured light in which they had viewed everything, was wearing off; and, in fact, there were many difficulties in their situation." (C-B., 48) Lady Willoughby is somewhat of an invalid. As they grow to know her, she more and more taxes her daughters' patience. Sir Francis' humour is unpredictable. He complains about meals and other minor domestic arrangements and he tells over and over again the same stories about India. The children whom they once thought they would like to teach prove to be unmanageable for them. Because they have no source of guidance or strength in their daily lives, for the sisters the result of so many difficulties in a family suddenly thrown together is that they evade the duties which, had they all grown up together, would have come naturally to them. The girls spend as much of their time as possible alone together. Because the sisters do not look to the church for guidance there is no thought but selfishness to guide the course of their lives, and they "settled into an impression, that their conduct was not of so much importance, while they were still unconfirmed." (C-B., 47)

Sir Francis rents a home in a community by the sea. There the girls try several activities, each one meeting with little success. They try first to help the poor. But instead of offering their services to their clergyman they allow themselves to be directed by two elderly sisters and therefore they have no proper authority to

guide their efforts. Emmie and Kate do not themselves have strength of purpose to meet the difficulties which arise and their activities on behalf of the poor come to nothing. Next the sisters take up teaching but again without proper direction from their clergyman. In her class, Emmie has some success teaching the Catechism but because she teaches from a High Church bias the founders of the school discourage her presence. The commitment to teaching is soon forgotten. Next the girls take up intellectual studies. They are influenced by a niece of Sir Francis' who has a knowledge of several languages. But with no specific reason for studying this activity too gives little satisfaction and is abandoned. The girls "did not go to school, did no poor work, and in fact, neglected all they had undertaken." (G-B., 119) These are perhaps "slight faults" but they are harshly judged:

> the question is, not whether the faults are slight in themselves, but whether they are not the greatest that can be committed under the circumstances. Emmeline and Kate could hardly have done anything very bad, but they did the worst they could. (G-B., 121-2)

This state of affairs does not continue unchecked, however, for a new member joins the household. Sir Francis' son, Frank, a young man about their age, joins the family during his holidays from school. Frank is a young person very different to the two sisters. Frank is obedient to the duties of family life. He is also obedient to the duties of his Church; he has long been confirmed and attends communion daily. Frank plays with the children, helps their governess to attend weekly communion, and helps the poor in the parish under the direction of the

vicar. He understands and accepts his duties and lives, in short, a practical and obedient course of daily life. Thus Frank provides a contrast to the girls and sets an example of correct behaviour but they are not quick to see its significance.

Frank also suffers a severe trial. His father wants to put him in the Guards but Frank wishes to be a clergyman, a vocation for which his father has no sympathy.

> "Look here, then, [Sir Francis says to his family] look at that boy: you heard the offer I made him yesterday, to get him a commission in the Guards, make him heir to a landed estate, and now what do you think he does and tells me? Why, that he has set his mind on going into the Church--setting down as a country curate, where no one will ever hear of him. I declare it is enough to provoke a saint, when there are youths enough in the world who would give their eyes for such an offer." (C-B., 111)

Even under this stressful situation Frank continues to live a dutiful life. With some reluctance he finally agrees to his father's offer because, as he explains to the girls, "I've no business to hold out against my father." (C-B., 131) But it is a great disappointment to him to give up the dream of being his uncle's curate and the decision torments him because he has "doubts whether he was failing in duty [to God], or which was the superior duty." (C-B., 128)

Frank's sense of his religious duty is firm in one respect, however. He will not give up daily communion even though his early morning attendance at church angers his father. Eventually the father and son speak angrily

to each other on the subject. Sir Francis requests his son to give up the daily church going but Frank holds on to the dictates of a higher duty than obedience to his father. He says "I cannot give up my duty."

> "Your Duty!" exclaimed Sir Francis; "and do you pretend to stand there, and tell me I am no judge of your duty? I should think your uncle /the vicar/ at least might have taught you to obey your father; but I suppose that is not a part of your new-fashioned doctrine!"
> . . . . . .
>
> "Then, Sir, I must say again, and once for all," said Frank, speaking more readily than Emmeline thought he could have done, "that you do not know what you are doing in requiring me to give these things up. I have been brought up to know that if I yielded this to you, I should be doing wrong, and soon should do worse." (C-B., 136)

The angry encounter is the last meeting between Sir Francis and his son.

Emmie and Kate take their young step-brother, Edwin, down to the beach. Edwin asks Frank to come along and Frank although dejected cannot disappoint the child. The young people walk a long way. They are heedless of the time and before they can retrace their steps the tide comes in too far for them to reach safety. They try to climb the steep rocks for safety and call for help. When their calls are finally heard the tide has advanced so much that their rescue is in doubt. As they wait for the boat Frank, who is most in danger, leaves messages for the girls to transmit, including, "tell my uncle that I am sure it is best as it is, I had rather it was so . . ;" (C-B., 145) and he implores the sisters not to "put off the Confirmation any longer. . . ." (C-B., 143)

Frank's death and his plea for her confirmation make a very strong impression on Kate. She recovers more quickly than Emmie and when Uncle Willoughby comes to the stricken household Kate has the advantage of his companionship. During one of their talks Kate sees that Uncle Willoughby is shocked to learn that she and Emmie are not confirmed. He remarks, "Then indeed you have double cause to be thankful that you were spared!" (C-B., 175) For the first time Kate realizes the seriousness of her omission, "neither at the hour of peril, nor subsequently, had she considered the danger of her own death and the life after it." (C-B., 175) Uncle Willoughby knows that Frank took communion the morning of his death and he is comforted by this knowledge. Kate realizes that communion is "generally necessary to salvation!" (C-B., 175) She needs no more encouragement. Kate resolves to be confirmed as soon as possible. In addition, she realizes that communion would have aided her in her daily domestic life: "if I had been confirmed, that grace might have kept me more in earnest about doing right." (C-B., 177)

Kate wishes to begin preparation at once but Emmie holds back. Emmie is not yet convinced of the importance of her confirmation and so instead of preparation she prefers her parents' plan of returning to London immediately. The girls' confirmation is deferred once again.

In their new home in Belgravia the family enters into society. Accompanied by their mother the girls attend balls and at these events the difference in earnestness between the sisters becomes evident. At first neither will dance

the polka. But Emmie gives in to the prevailing fashion. "It was a state of intoxication; music, amusement, dancing, admiration, had got hold of Emmeline's mind, and carried her along." (C-B., 220) Kate, on the other hand, refuses to give in as a "proof of sincerity, by which she might try herself, whether she was still anchored to the feelings with which the events of the spring had inspired her." (C.B., 218) As a second proof, Kate attends daily church service but Emmie does not.

Emmie's state of intoxication gets so out of hand that she foolishly and carelessly attends a Roman Catholic service with some friends who offer the excuse of hearing the excellent music. Because of the error of her attendance, she misses the first and unexpected visit by Lady Constance and Lord Herbert Sommerville. Kate alone enjoys the pleasure of spending a day with her sister and brother-in-law.

It is soon arranged that Emmie and Kate accompany Constance and Herbert to Herbert's new parish in Dearport. To live with Constance and Herbert had been one of Emmie's castles but the reality is in sad contrast with her dream. The parish is in a poor area, the vicarage small and shabby. Emmie cannot command her feelings. "The castle of having Constance with them being as much a failure as the rest, Emmeline continued in her habitual state, divided between languor and excitement." (C-B., 216) The source of Emmie's instability is that she

> fancied great things, she had high designs of virtue, but little reality; she left untouched the practical duties that lay at once before her, and strained after high things of her own imagination, while utterly neglecting the means she had always been taught was the especial channel of grace. (C-B., 223-4)

It is Herbert who finally wins Emmie's confidence and shows her the error of her ways. As they sit alone together one evening Herbert thinks of his dead sister, Anne, and forgets Emmie's presence. When he remembers her he says, "I beg your pardon, Emmie; I had fallen into a brown study. I was thinking of the wonderful castles Annie and I used to build." (C.B., 266-7) The remark touches a sympathetic cord in Emmie and she is inspired to try to tell him of her unhappiness:

> 'I have tried everything, and it has failed me; it all turns out to have no permanent pleasure in it. Home, and caring for poor people, and learning, and occupation. Yes, I see what you are going to say--religion--but indeed and indeed, Herbert, I have tried that too, and in earnest; and I don't know how it may be with other people, but it does no more than the rest for me. I always thought it would be right, and I should be happy again if you and Constance were but at home; but here you are, and--oh dear!" (C-B., 270)

The only thing which Emmie has cared for, she confesses is "that Roman Catholic service" (C-B., 271) As for her life she has "no hope, no purpose." (C-B., 270)

Herbert questions Emmie about the various occupations which she has tried and finds that each was given up because it became "tiresome" or "irksome". (C-B., 272-3) In each instance he finds that Emmie gave up an occupation when "it became no longer nice." (C-B., 273) The key to

her behaviour is that "You had not begun because you felt it a duty, so it was only another castle." (C-B., 273)

As for religion, which Emmie thinks has failed her too, Herbert finds that although she had "the beginning" which for her was "thinking--caring about holy things; stirring up one's pirit--feeling love to God . . ." (C-B., 274) she did not do anything as a result.

> "You had the beginning, but what came of it? How was it evidenced? You tried to feel, what did you try to do?
>
> "I was not well--I could not do much," said Emmeline.
>
> "But what did you try to do? Did you try to be more attentive to the home duties in which you had fallen short?"
>
> "I did not think that was it."
>
> . . . . . .
>
> "Did you try, when you were taken to London, to keep from following the foolish undesirable ways of other people of your own age, which you yourself thought wrong at first sight?"
>
> "Do you mean the polka, Herbert?"
>
> "Or did you, in the new scene, allow yourself to relax in the devotional exercises you had taken up? Don't answer me, but yourself." (C-B., 274-5)

The source of each failure, Herbert tells Emmie, is that she has "no comfort of mind, no true wisdom, no strength, no firmness, no abiding sensation of love and fear of God." (C-B., 275) Emmie lacks all these qualities, and so her daily life has lacked direction and duty, because she cut herself from the "means of receiving the strength of the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, giving us the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and ghostly strength, the Spirit of knowledge and true Godliness, and the Spirit of God's holy fear." (C-B., 275)

Comfort and strength come from communion which Emmie denies herself because she defers her confirmation. But Herbert finally convinces her by his argument and she exclaims, "Oh, Herbert, would it do all that for me? I do believe it would be peace at last." (C-B., 275)

Emmie agrees to be prepared for confirmation but before the event can occur news comes from Sir Francis and Lady Willoughby. They plan to winter in Paris. It is a great opportunity and a temptation for the girls and it is a test of their seriousness. They must give up either the opportunity to go to Paris or the opportunity to be confirmed. Happily the girls choose to be confirmed and the long deferred confirmation finally takes place as the ending and climax of the book. The implication is that the sisters will thereafter have a source of strength with which to carry out their daily domestic duties.

In no novel published after The Castle-Builders does religion play so obvious a role. By emphasising confirmation as a preliminary to religious safeguards The Castle-Builders tries to show that religion is intimately connected with the practical side of life. Hereafter religious beliefs play a supporting rather than dominating role. The connection between religion and domestic duties is implied more than it is stated in her later works. The implication and also the lesson of the novel is that thereafter the sisters will have a source of strength with which to meet and carry out their daily domestic duties.

# C H A P T E R  IV

## COURTSHIP: The Heir of Redclyffe

### i

### Introduction

The Heir of Redclyffe was published in 1853. It is a longer and more complex novel than the four lessons for young people examined in the preceeding chapter. With its greater length and fuller development of character and story, the Heir represents an advance in Miss Yonge's development as a novelist even though its date of publication is one year before The Castle-Builders.[1] The Heir of Redclyffe, unlike the lessons for young people, has adults, albeit young, as the main characters and its setting and incidents, as well as the duties and responsibilities of the characters, are drawn from the adult world. The most important difference between the Heir and the lessons for young people, however, is that the moral lesson which Miss Yonge wishes to illustrate in the Heir is

[1] The Castle-Builders was published serially in the Monthly Packet, which Miss Yonge edited, from April 1851 to May 1853. However the novel and its moral lesson are mentioned in a preface which Miss Yonge wrote for The Two Guardians in October 1852 and therefore must have been finished by that date. Miss Coleridge says that the Heir was finished in 1851. Charlotte Mary Yonge, p. 166. But there is no record of when any of the early novels were actually written so although The Castle-Builders was published as a book after the Heir it is impossible to say which was written first.

"considerably larger than those of her earlier stories,"[2] that is to say, it has wider application for the reader as compared to the more specific and therefore more restricted moral lessons in her stories about young people.

The lessons in behaviour in the Heir can be seen through three major themes, interwoven and interdependent. The first is the theme which inspired Miss Yonge to write The Heir of Redclyffe. According to her own account the original idea was "given" to her by her friend Miss Marianne Dyson. It concerns two men, both heroes, whose personalities differ so radically that conflict is inevitable and, in the end, disastrous:

> there were two characters she wanted to see brought out in a story--namely, the essentially contrite and the self-satisfied. Good men, we agreed, were in most of the books of the day, subdued by the memory of some involuntary disaster-generally the killing of someone out shooting--whereas the "penitence of the saints" was unattempted. [Miss Dyson suggested instead that] The self-satisfied hero was to rate the humble one at still lower than his own estimate, to persecute him, and never be undeceived till he had caused his death.[3]

To this end Miss Yonge created two characters: Guy Morville, a contrite hero who is sensitive of his many faults, and

[2] Kathleen Tillotson, "The Heir of Redclyffe" in Mid-Victorian Studies, Kathleen and Geoffrey Tillotson (Oxford: The Athlone Press, 1965), p. 55.

[3] Ethel Romanes, Charlotte Mary Yonge: An Appreciation (London: A. R. Mowbray and Co. Ltd., 1908), p. 65.

his cousin, Philip Morville, a self-satisfied hero who is seemingly a dutiful man but who nevertheless persecutes his cousin, Guy.

The second theme in the novel was, in a sense, given to Miss Yonge by the Kebles because it was they who introduced her to Sintram and His Companions by La Motte Fouque.[4] In the Heir there is a resemblance between Sintram and one of Miss Yonge's heroes, Guy Morville. Sintram and His Companions was written in the eighteenth century but its setting and characters are both medieval. The knight Sintram has for his companions Sin and Death, both of whom try to vanquish him in his efforts to follow Christian principles.

Miss Yonge had an interest in knighthood. "I once set to work to copy the likenesses of all the 'true knights' to be collected,"[5] she wrote when she was an old woman. The story of Sintram inspired her to incorporate in the character of Guy Morville the attributes of a 'true knight.' The other characters in the novel recognize this quality in Guy. His cousin, Charlotte Edmonstone, declares emphatically that he is indeed "a true knight."[6] The story of Sintram is also responsible for the medieval

[4] Battiscombe, Charlotte Mary Yonge, p. 64.

[5] Ibid., p. 55.

[6] Charlotte M. Yonge, The Heir of Redclyffe (London: Gerald Duckworth and Co. Ltd., 1964), p. 250. Hereafter all quotations from this work in this chapter will be followed by Heir and page number in parenthesis.

aura which occasionally emerges in the novel. Philip does not share the conviction that Guy is a 'true knight' but he too partakes of the medieval atmosphere: "the ancient name and long ancestry, which conferred a romantic interest . . . caused even Philip to look up to him with a feudal feeling as head of the family." (Heir, 87)

Philip will be discussed in the light of the idea which inspired the novel, the self-satisfied hero in conflict with the contrite hero. Guy, the contrite hero, will be discussed more in the light of his connection with the allegory of Sintram and His Companions. Because of the interest in contrasting heroes in The Heir of Redclyffe there is more emphasis on male characters than is typical of Miss Yonge's domestic novels. Yet Miss Yonge does not neglect women characters nor does she neglect the domestic aspects of the novel. The domestic situation, in fact, provides the setting for the main development of the novel.

In the Edmonstone family there are two grown daughters. Guy falls in love with the younger, Amy, and Philip with the elder, Laura. The contrasting courtships provide the material for both the third theme of the novel and for the lesson in moral behaviour which it explicitly illustrates. All four of the lovers are required to give practical examples of their morality, especially in regard to duty and obedience to parents and parental wishes. Thus the third theme is the great theme that runs like a thread through all Miss Yonge's domestic fiction, the theme of duty and obedience.

ii

## Philip: The Self-Satisfied Hero

Mr. and Mrs. Edmonstone have in all four children, three daughters, one of whom is young, and an invalided son, Charles. Their domestic life is changed at the opening of the novel by the death of Sir Guy of Redclyffe, an event which leaves Mr. Edmonstone as the sole surviving guardian of the grandson and heir to Redclyffe, Guy, now Sir Guy Morville. Mr. Edmonstone decides to bring Guy to Hollywell in order to supervise his last years before he reaches his majority; he journeys to Redclyffe for the funeral and returns with the young baronet. His wife's nephew, Philip Morville, accompanies Mr. Edmonstone to the funeral because Philip, too, is related to Guy and is in fact a closer relation than are the Edmonstones.

Philip occupies a place of importance at Hollywell. Older than both the Edmonstone daughters and also the invalid Charles, Philip acts as guide in the pursuits and pleasures of the family. His superiority of character, which seems to give him the right to be their leader, seems to have been proved in his school career and in his own family life. Philip was an excellent student but he gave up a University education in order to support his two orphaned sisters. To do so he took up a career in the army; but unhappily his sacrifice was in vain, for the younger sister died and the older sister married the local doctor. Even so, at Hollywell the Edmonstones respect Philip for his sacrifice and for his highly developed moral sense. In fact, the family's opinion of

Philip, and Philip's opinion of himself are so high that neither Philip's behaviour nor his judgement are ever questioned.

It is this complete absence of any criticism, or indeed of any need for criticism, which in the last analysis brings about Philip's downfall because it fosters his self-righteous conceit. In consequence he fails to examine his own actions and motives and concentrates instead on those of Guy. Philip is a hero and not a villain, but he is a self-satisfied, if not indeed a tragic, hero. It is the fact that he has come so close to perfection that ultimately brings him low.

Thus when Guy joins the Hollywell household, Philip extends his mantle of superiority over Guy, too. Philip's attitude of superiority has several sources. To begin with he is older than his cousin. Once, several years before Old Sir Guy's death, Philip visited the Redclyffe mansion. On that occasion he observed the young Guy's temper and lack of self-control. As a result he formed a low opinion of his cousin's character which, indeed, he retains. In addition, his personality and Guy's are not compatible and in the small clashes which occur at Hollywell it is Guy, not Philip, who always seems to be in the wrong.

Then, too, Guy is moody and, as Philip had occasion to observe, he has a temper which it is difficult for him to control. These characteristics Guy and the other characters, including Philip, believe to be serious faults and cause Guy to have a low, humble opinion of himself. During the course of the novel Guy's temper

causes him to "sin" against Mr. Edmonstone and against Philip. These "sins" are only harsh words and thoughts of revenge but they are treated as serious and they are the basis for Guy's pentitence or contrition which is necessary for his characterization as the "contrite" hero.

Even when Guy's weaknesses of character are taken into account, Philip still judges his cousin harshly. His biased view is evident even when he attempts to be candid in his estimate of Guy:

> "I am afraid I saw the lion just now in his flashing eyes and contracted brow. There is an impatience of advice, a vehemence of manner that I can hardly deem satisfactory. I do not speak from prejudice, for I think highly of his candour, warmth of heart, and desire to do right; but from all I have seen, I should not venture as yet to place much dependence on his steadiness of character or command of temper." (Heir, 26)

Firm in his opinion, Philip continually, almost deliberately, tries to irritate his cousin with his superior attitude and his disregard for Guy's sensibilities.

Thus antagonism grows between the two Morvilles, particularly in small matters. Miss Yonge contrasts Philip's attitude towards Guy with that of the Edmonstones who find him delightful. Only Philip, who manages to be a frequent visitor at Hollywell despite his army career, cannot see Guy in proper perspective. His attitude results in almost constant frictions between the two, as for example in the matter of what Guy reads.

> "Byron!" exclaimed Philip. I hope you are not dwelling on him?"
> "Only a volume I found in my room."
> "Oh, the Giaour!" said Philip. "Well, there is no great damage done; but it is bad food for excitable minds. Don't let it get hold of you."
> "Very well;" and there was a cloud, but it cleared in a moment. . . . (Heir, 68)

Ordinarily a person of clear judgment, Philip is so self-sufficient that he leaves no opening for anyone to bring to his attention his misjudgement of his cousin and therefore of himself. He is the self-satisfied hero and his disastrous course of action begins with small persecutions of Guy such as his authoratative manner in regard to Byron. These difficulties can be easily overcome and quickly forgotten. But eventually Philip makes a grave error of judgement and involves Guy in a false accusation of a serious nature. Philip suddenly announces to his uncle that "There can now be no doubt that he /Guy/ has been gambling." (Heir, 158)

Mr. Edmonstone is dumbfounded when he hears these words. Even so Philip manages to convince his uncle that a cheque which Guy has endorsed to a gambler, and an application by Guy to his guardian for a large sum of money, are absolute proofs of heavy losses at gambling. Philip, by taking advantage of his uncle's initial fury at the supposed sin, induces him to write to Guy stating that unless the accusation can be refuted, all intercourse between Guy and the Edmonstones must cease. The demand for an explanation cannot be satisfied, because the money which Guy requested from his guardian was to be used to found a nursing sisterhood and Guy has been pledged to

secrecy concerning the plan. Thus his inability to account for the requested money further strengthens Philip's accusation, while on the other hand, Guy believes that his own word to the contrary should be sufficient to clear him.

Philip begins actively to investigate the accusation. The voluntary and even eager nature of his investigation causes it to become unjust persecution. For the self-satisfied hero to persecute the humble one was part of Miss Dyson's original idea. Philip visits Guy in Oxford for the purpose of discovering evidence which will support his charge. After an unsatisfactory interview with Guy, during which he cannot force Guy to confess, Philip then applies to the tradesmen in Oxford for evidence of debts. But he can find nothing amiss. Then Philip commits another grave error of judgement. He leaves Oxford without returning to Guy's rooms in order to admit candidly that he can find no evidence of guilt. "Philip was conscious that it would have been kind to have gone to say that, so far, he had found nothing amiss, but he did not like giving Guy this passing triumph." (Heir, 200) The invalid Charles evaluates Philip's behaviour and points to the subtle change which has gradually taken place in Philip's attitude toward Guy. Charles says, "I gave you credit for domineering and prejudice now I see it is malignity." (Heir, 206)

For the Edmonstone family the effects of Philip's malignity toward Guy are eventually overcome through the intervention of the Redclyffe steward, who reveals that

the gambling debt was in fact a payment for one of Guy's poor relations. Once cleared Guy immediately returns to Hollywell with his guardian and to the Edmonstone's good graces. But the effects of the persecution on Philip's own personality are not so quickly or so easily cured. Philip does not accept the steward's explanation, and after their encounter at Oxford, Philip does not see Guy again, nor offer an apology for his conduct, until their last meeting when Philip brings about, in accordance with the original theme, the death of the "essentially contrite" hero.

Guy and Amy marry almost as soon as Guy comes back into Mr. Edmonstone's favour. The couple decide to have their honeymoon in the Austrian Tyrol, where Philip has gone for a walking tour, in order that they might meet up with him. Guy had been violently angry with Philip when he first learned of the accusation of gambling and now he is sorry for his violent feeling. He wishes to amend their past differences and to show friendship for his cousin. However, when they do meet up with Philip they part again as a result of friction and obduracy on Philip's part. There is a rumour of fever at a village which the three had thought of visiting. Philip judges the rumour to be false, and, satisfied with his judgment, attempts to persuade Amy and Guy to go with him. Guy acknowledges the foolishness of listening to rumours but nevertheless he refuses to risk Amy's health by taking a chance.

For the first time Philip fails to gain ascendency over Guy. Satisfied with his own opinion, however, Philip will not give in to Guy's judgment and he journeys to

the infected area. Philip's action is not involuntary; it is deliberate and it results in Guy's death. Philip catches the fever and the young couple go to his aid when they hear of his severe illness.

Guy believes that in nursing Philip he can show his good will toward the person who has wronged him. His tender nursing forces Philip to recognize Guy's good qualities. He sees these for the first time and his judgment of Guy changes. "Never was there such a nurse as he, Amy: I have felt much more than I can express, especially now. You will never have to complain of my harsh judgment again!" (Heir, 338) Philip plans to amend his behaviour toward Guy but the opportunity is denied to him for Guy catches the fever from him and dies. Thus Philip, by a voluntary action brings about the death of the "essentially contrite" hero.

In his role of self-satisfied hero, Philip not only misjudges Guy but he also misjudges himself. Once he recognizes Guy's worth therefore, only part of his errors are righted. Even though Philip looked forward to showing "how his brotherly affection should for the rest of his life testify his altered mind, and atone for past ill-will," (Heir, 365) he does not understand the source of his persecution until he finally recognizes to the full the part he has played in both the persecution and the death of his cousin. The revelation comes to Philip with the explanation in his will of why Guy requested money from his guardian, money which Philip had thought was for gambling debts, but which Guy intended to use for founding a nursing sisterhood.

> Philip had returned to his own room . . . overwhelmed by the first full view of the extent of the injuries he had inflicted, the first perception that pride and malevolence had been the true source of his prejudice and misconceptions, and for the first time conscious of the long-fostered conceit that had been his bane from boyhood. All had flashed on him with the discovery of the true purpose of the demand which he thought had justified his persecution. He saw the glory of Guy's character and the part he had acted,--the scales of self-admiration fell from his eyes, and he knew both himself and his cousin. (Heir, 365)

Miss Yonge's addition to the original idea was to make Philip heir to the man whose death he had caused. The inheritance of Redclyffe is a lifelong burden for Philip whose awareness of Guy's good qualities once awakened would never be dulled. In addition, as the heir of Redclyffe he feels himself to be unworthy to follow in Guy's footsteps.

The continuation of the novel after Guy's death, which deals predominantly with Philip's partial recovery of his self respect, shows the importance Miss Yonge attached to the role of the self-satisfied hero. For Philip, not Guy, is the "heir of Redclyffe." From the opening pages of the novel, when Guy inherits his grandfather's estate, his heir is Philip. Since, therefore, Philip is to inherit Redclyffe it was necessary to make him morally worthy of being Guy's successor. Miss Yonge succeeds in doing this by showing that, in his humility and new self-awareness, Philip has heroic proportions. Charles again notes this development in Philip when he says, "when I see proofs of his being entirely repentant, I perceive he is a thoroughly great man." (Heir, 458)

Yet the continuation of the novel after Guy's death has a defect, which is connected with Miss Yonge's original conception of Philip as a self-satisfied hero. Philip's atonement for Guy's death is depressing, not inspiring. Miss Yonge describes the relapse of his fever, his recurrent headaches, his growing remorse as his understanding of Guy's innocence increases, his never-ending sense of guilt. She lowers his spirits so effectively that she finds it impossible to raise them again. But if it had been in her power to raise them, it is to be doubted whether she would have done so. Since Philip's feelings in the earlier part of the book noramlly operate on the level of self-satisfaction, it is necessary, if he is to atone adequately for his treatment of Guy, for his repentance to leave him in a totally opposite frame of mind. To this end, Miss Yonge employs the device of exaggeration. We may note in passing that Mr. Keble concurred with Charlotte Yonge's depiction of Philip's remorse. She records that "Mr. Keble thinks it was Philip's character to over-do repentance. . . ."[7] Nevertheless the reader feels very much weighed down by the repentance which Miss Yonge tried again and again to express in great enough magnitude to do justice to Guy's death, on the one hand, and to Philip's heroic stature on the other. That Philip never succeeds in expiating Guy's death means that our final view of him, at the end of the novel, is of a man

[7] Coleridge, Charlotte Mary Yonge, p. 189.

doomed to "a harassed, anxious life, with little of repose or relief." (Heir, 463) This Miss Yonge may have believed to be a fitting punishment for self-satisfaction.

iii

## Guy: The Sintram Theme

In the development of the novel according to the original theme, Guy plays one important role as the "essentially contrite" hero. To fulfill this role Guy is depicted as having an almost uncontrollable temper, a shortcoming of which he is painfully aware and for which he is penitent. This characteristic is in evidence when, for example, Guy requests Mrs. Edmonstone to "take me in hand" and "tell me if I am wrong" because he says, "you know how little I can trust myself." (Heir, 20) However Guy's importance in the novel is much greater than that of the humble hero in opposition to the self-satisfied hero, and he has a greater struggle to contend with than his struggle with Philip. Guy's personal struggle, the second theme in our discussion of the novel, is similar although not identical to the struggles and temptations which beset Sintram.[8]

In La Motte Fouque's work Sintram is a man who strives to overcome the doom, which he has inherited,

[8] Kathleen Tillotson uses the term "analogue" in order to compare the lives of Sintram and Guy. "The Heir of Redclyffe," p. 54.

of his father's sins, as well as his own inclinations to evil acts. He has two aids in his battle. First his mother, Verena, who lives in a convent and prays constantly for his soul, and second the example of a noble Christian life set by his friend, the knight Falko. Miss Yonge does not directly parallel the personalities and actions of the two characters, however. Instead she shows a partial similarity between the two men, a similarity of circumstances of which Guy is aware.

In her introduction to the 1901 edition of Sintram, Charlotte Yonge speaks of "external temptation and hereditary inclination pervading all" of Sintram's life but says that in his struggles "Grace and Prayer aid the effort."[9] This description applies equally well to the life of Guy Morville. Both Sintram and Guy have difficult struggles with their own personalities and with the situation they each inherit. The details are different but both depend and even rely upon Christian faith and observances for strength and guidance. Guy's "hereditary inclination" is twofold. It embraces the Redclyffe temper which Guy has inherited and also the heriditary doom of the Morvilles which began with a distant ancestor "who murdered Thomas à Becket." (Heir, 5) The doom awaiting Guy is to live and perhaps to die in an un-Christian manner. The "external temptation," which incites Guy to display his temper and therefore to drive himself toward the Redclyffe doom, Miss Yonge presents in the person of Philip. As we have seen, she was not merely concerned to depict two characters who cannot get on well together; she gave Philip the additional

[9] (London: Wells, Gardner, Darton & Co., 1901), p. xvii.

burden of causing Guy's death. The series of events whereby Philip moves towards his irredeemable mistake is also the series of events whereby Guy meets and conquers his temptations and therefore his doom.

Some of the events in Guy's life resemble events in Sintram's life but more important than the resemblances in their lives is the fact that Guy knows of Sintram and his struggles and that Guy himself sees the similarities. His introduction to Sintram occurs soon after he joins the Hollywell household.

> "Nothing has affected him so much as Sintram," said Laura. "I never saw anything like it. He took it up by chance, and stood reading it while all those strange expressions began to flit over his face, and at last he fairly cried over it so much, that he was obliged to fly out of the room. How often he has read it I cannot tell; I believe he has bought one for himself, and it is as if the engraving had a fascination for him; he stands looking at it as if he was in a dream." (Heir, 53)

Soon after Laura's account of Sintram's fascination for Guy, Guy explains to Laura and Amy just why he is so moved by the book. His sense of awareness of the doom impending in his own life has been made more acute because of his reading of Sintram.

> "Is it not written that the sins of the fathers shall be visited on the children? You wonder to see me so foolish about Sintram. Well, it is my firm belief that such a curse of sin and death as was on Sintram rests on the descendants of that miserable man [the murderer]."
>
> The girls were silent, struck with awe and dismay at the fearful reality with which he pronounced the words. At last Amy whispered, "But Sintram conquered his doom." (Heir, 55)

To help him conquer his doom Sintram had the constant prayers of his mother, Verena. It would seem reasonable to expect that Mrs. Edmonstone would be a Verena to Guy because Guy accepts her as a substitute for his own mother who died at his birth. But Mrs. Edmonstone does not take on the role of Verena to Guy. Instead Miss Yonge gives that special office to Guy's lover, Amy. When Guy proposes to Amy he acknowledges his very special regard for her by asking for her prayers. "To feel that I had your love to keep me safe, to know that you watched for me, prayed for me, were my own, my Verena,--oh Amy! it would be more joy than I have ever dared to hope for." (Heir, 146-7)

Once she has established Amy's love and her prayers as a safeguard against Guy's impending doom, Miss Yonge tests his temper and his resolve to do right. Soon after Guy acknowledges his attachment for Amy, Philip falsely accuses him of gambling. When Guy hears of the false charges he reacts violently. His attachment to the Edmonstone family and his special love for Amy help to increase the violent anger he feels towards Philip, the instigator, and Mr. Edmonstone, the writer of the accusing letter. His Redclyffe temper surges up, and his face glows with a

> burning, glowing red, the features almost convulsed, the large veins in the forehead and temple swollen with the blood that rushed through them; and if ever his eyes flashed with the dark lightening of Sir Hugh's [the murderer] it was then. (Heir, 173)

Anger shows in his face, and anger incites Guy to say harsh words against Mr. Edmonstone; "My guardian is a mere weak fool," (Heir, 175) of which he later repents, but anger also incites Guy to murderous feelings of revenge towards Philip. "'I'll make him repent it,' added he, with a grim fierceness of determination." (Heir, 173)

Guy quickly realizes that this temptation to violence is the trial to determine his life and he sets for himself the task of conquering completely the evil inclination in his heart. In a great battle he succeeds in forcing himself to accept in his soul the Christian ideal of loving his enemies. In his success in this gravest of battles, Guy triumphs forever over the hereditary doom of the Morvilles and he succeeds in subduing completely the temper which nearly drove him towards that doom.

> It was horror at such wickedness [revenge] that first checked him, and brought him back to the combat [with his temper] His was not a temper that was satisfied with half measures. He locked his hands more rigidly together, vowing to compel himself, ere he left the spot, to forgive his enemy--forgive him candidly--forgive him, so as never again to have to say, "I forgive him!" He did not try to think, for reflection only lashed up his sense of the wrong; but, as if there was power in the words alone, he forced his lips to repeat,--
>
> "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us."
>
> Coldly and hardly were they spoken at first; again he pronounced them, again, again,--each time the tone was softer, each time they came more from the heart. At last the remembrance of greater wrongs, and worse revilings came upon him; his eyes filled with

> tears, the most subduing and healing of all thoughts--that of the great Example--became present to him; the foe was driven back. (Heir, 175-6)

Because he cannot explain the accusations against him, Guy suffers banishment from Hollywell as, similarly, Sintram suffered banishment from his father's castle. In some measure Guy accepts the banishment as just because "patient waiting and yielding is fit penance for my violence." (Heir, 252) By acknowledging his guilt and accepting penance Guy also displays here the "contrite" part of his characterization. However his separation from Amy is almost more sorrow than he can bear. Nearly desperate in his loneliness, Guy wonders, "Was the Redclyffe doom of sin and sorrow really closing in upon him?" (Heir, 213)

At Hollywell meanwhile, Amy also finds the period of banishment a difficult time. She consoles herself by retaining her role of Verena. Just as Sintram's mother continued to pray for him throughout his struggles, Amy believes that "though she might no longer think of him as her lover, she might be his Verena still; whether he knew it or not." (Heir, 189) It is interesting to note that Guy's own mother, who died at his birth, is denied even a posthumous part in his development. During his period of banishment Guy uncovers some information about his mother and although he thinks tenderly of her, he realizes "that he had not lost a Verena in her." (Heir, 227)

The periods of banishment of the two heroes have another similarity: for Guy as for Sintram, banishment

provides an opportunity for self-evaluation. Guy does not repine incessantly. Instead he comes to terms with himself and with his position in an honest and self-aware manner which characterizes his humble, "contrite" personality.

> "But bear it I must and will!" said he, lifting his head from the carved chimneypiece, where he had been resting it. "I have been in will a murderer myself, and what right have I to repine like the Israelites, with their self-justifying proverb? No; let me be thankful that I was not given up even then, but have been able to repent, and do a little better next time. It will be a blessing as yet ungranted to any of us, if indeed I should bear to the full the doom of sorrow, so that it may be vouchsafed me only to avoid actual guilt. Yes, Amy, your words are still with me--"Sintram conquered his doom"--and it was by following death! Welcome, then, whatever may be in store for me, were it even a long, cheerless life without you, Amy. There is another world!" (Heir, 220-1)

Once she has brought Guy to this resigned frame of mind and thereby proves the nobility of his character, Miss Yonge reunites him with the Edmonstones. They hear first of his bravery in the rescue of ship-wrecked sailors and then Mr. Edmonstone, who has been impressed by Guy's bravery, readily accepts the steward's explanation for the gambling accusations. Thus when Guy journeys to London on his twenty-first birthday, he finds that his guardian has not only forgiven him but now encourages him to marry Amy.

Philip does not attend the wedding, for he does not accept the explanations offered. However, Miss Yonge may have had another reason for keeping Philip away from the

wedding festivities. Guy's attitude toward Philip has become one of Christian love but Philip's attitude toward Guy has remained the same, and so Philip will continue to tempt Guy in the old manner. At the next meeting of the cousins, therefore, Guy will experience the decisive test of his new love for Philip as well as his new command of temper. Their next meeting, therefore, determines whether or not Guy has once and for all conquered his temper, his "hereditary inclination," and can command himself in the presence of "external temptation" and thereby overcome the doom of the Morvilles. Miss Yonge may have considered that the expected contest was not compatible with the festivities of a wedding. Furthermore, as will become evident in the following section, it was necessary to depict Guy and Amy's wedding as a happy occasion in order to show a contrast with the wedding of Philip and Laura.

Thus the contest takes place, as we have seen, while Guy and Amy journey through the Austrian Tyrol on their wedding tour. The confrontation begins in a familiar fashion. Philip retains his superior attitude and attempts to provoke Guy into a display of temper. The disagreement between the cousins arises during a discussion concerning their tour, whether or not the trio should journey into an area where fever has been reported. Since Guy has yielded in the past, Philip forcefully tries to gain his own way. But he finds, to his vexation, that he can no longer command nor irritate his cousin.

> Never had his manner been more vexatious, though without departing from the coolness which always characterized it; but all the time, Guy, while firm and unmoved in purpose, kept his temper perfectly, and apparently without effort. Even Amabel glowed with indignation, at the assumption with which he was striving to put her husband down, though she rejoiced to see its entire failure: for some sensible argument, or some gay, lively, good-humoured reply, was the utmost he could elicit. Guy did not seem to be in the least irritated or ruffled by the very behaviour which caused him so many struggles. Having once seriously said that he did not think it right to run into danger, without adequate cause, he held his position with so much ease, that he could afford to be playful, and laugh at his own dread of infection, his changeableness, his credulity. Never had temper been more entirely subdued; for surely if he could bear this, he need never fear himself again. (Heir, 317)

This scene is final proof that Guy has conquered himself and in doing so has, like Sintram, conquered his doom.

However Guy himself is not completely satisfied with his relationship with Philip until he has been reconciled to his cousin. This, as we have seen, takes place when Guy nurses Philip through the fever. The reconciliation of the cousins brings great joy to Guy who feels that finally he has won Philip's love. Lying on his deathbed Guy receives a visit from Philip. "Whether it was his gentle force, or of Philip's own accord Amabel could not tell; but as he lay with that look of perfect peace and love, Philip bent down over him and kissed his forehead." (Heir, 362)

Guy now dies. The conflict between a self-satisfied and a contrite hero required his death. Without this catastrophe Philip could not experience the remorse

which occurs when he realizes that he will have no opportunity to make amends. The Sintram theme, let it be noted, demanded no such death. Sintram lives on into old age and when the book closes he has been given a knight's reward. The knight Falko who was both one of his temptations and an example of good, sends his only son to him to be trained as a knight.

A reward after suffering is the rainbow after the storm which Sintram wins and which Amy predicts for her own marriage on her wedding day. She says, "if there is a doom on us, I am not afraid, if it will only bring a rainbow." (Heir, 303) There was a doom on Guy and Amy, the doom of a brief married life. Possibly the rainbow is the child which is born to comfort Amy.

Guy's death marks the disastrous conclusion of Philip's persecution but it also marks a great Christian act, that a man lay down his life for his friend. Miss Yonge suitably gilds so Christian a death; she describes the last moments that Guy spends on earth in such a manner that we may rest assured of the strength of his faith and of his heavenly reward.

> At that moment the sun was rising, and the light streamed in at the open window, and over the bed; but it was "another dawn than ours" that he beheld, as his most beautiful of all smiles beamed over his face, and he said, "Glory in the Highest!--peace--good will" --A struggle for breath gave an instant's look of pain; then he whispered so that she could but just hear--"The last prayer." She read the Commendatory Prayer. She knew not the exact moment, but even as she said "Amen" she perceived it was over. The soul was with Him with whom dwell the spirits of just men made perfect; and there lay the earthly part with a smile on the face. (Heir, 364)

iv

## Duty and Obedience in Courtship

The third theme in the novel concerns another area in which the lives of Guy and Philip contrast. Philip inherits Redclyffe, marries the beautiful Laura, and lives in material comfort ever after. It is true that he suffers, but through no one's fault but his own. Guy likewise inherits Redclyffe and marries Amy Edmonstone, whom he loves. But he is the victim of unjust suspicions which are a trial to his vehement temper and which cause him and Amy a long separation. In addition he dies before his twenty-second birthday, after he has been married only a few months. When we consider the contrast between Philip's arrogance and Guy's humility it would seem that justice acted blindly in meeting out rewards to the cousins. The rewards seem even more unjust when we consider the courtships of the two couples, because there is an enormous contrast between the behaviour of the two men. Philip fails in his duty to Laura and in his duty and obedience to the Edmonstones. Guy is both dutiful to Amy and dutiful and obedient to her parents. Furthermore, the attitudes of the two sisters add to the discrepancies in the behaviour of the two couples. Laura connives at Philip's disobedience but, as we might expect, Amy's behaviour matches Guy's high standard. Each courtship gives a lesson in moral behaviour which is directly opposite to the surface appearance of the two situations. Although the disobedient couple, for instance, seem to be rewarded they are in fact punished.

Miss Yonge shows in detail the misery which results from disobedience and the joy which results from obedient behaviour.

The courtships contrast from the beginning in the different ways in which the two heroes declare their love. Philip is the first to betray his feelings. The incident occurs early in the novel and, for Philip, in an unexpected manner. One day he decides to walk to Hollywell in order to warn his especial cousin, Laura, that Guy may be paying her more attention than is suitable. However he chances to meet her alone as she sketches in the woods, and his dispassionate warning to "take care" (Heir, 91) turns into a passionate declaration of love.

> "Laura, I cannot but look on you with what may seem over solicitude. Since I lost Fanny, and worse than lost Margaret, you have been my home; my first, my most precious interest. O Laura!" and he did not even attempt to conceal the trembling and tenderness of his voice, "could I bear to lose you, to see you thrown away or changed--you, dearest, best of all?"
> . . . . . .
>
> If ever face plainly told another that he was her first and best, Laura's did so now. Away went misgivings, and he looked at her in happiness too great for speech; at least, he could not speak till he had mastered his emotion, but his countenance was sufficient reply. Even then, in the midst of this flood of ecstasy, came the thought, "What have I done?"
>
> He had gone further than he had ever intended. It was a positive avowal of love; and what would ensue? Cessation of intercourse with her, endless vexation, the displeasure of her family, loss of influence, contempt, and from Mr. Edmonstone, for the pretensions of a penniless soldier.

> His joy was too great to be damped, but it was rendered cautious. "Laura my own!" (what delight the words gave her,) "you have made me very happy. We know each other now, and trust each other for ever."
>
> "O yes, yes; nothing can alter what has grown up with us."
>
> "It is forever!" repeated Philip. "But, Laura, let us be content with our own knowledge of what we are to each other. Do not let us call in others to see our happiness." (Heir, 92-93)

That Philip should love Laura is not wrong; but that he should conceal his love for her and encourage her to do the same is indeed wrong. Before their meeting in the woods Philip had been harsh in his judgement of Guy and somewhat superior towards his aunt and uncle and his cousins. But this secret declaration of love marks a new turn in Philip's development, it is the "first occasion that he had ever actually swerved from the path of right." (Heir, 93) The wrong in which Philip engages and in which he involves Laura is concealment and Charlotte Yonge emphasises the change from innocent to guilty demeanor of the pair when she says that as Mrs. Edmonstone approaches the couple she "little guessed that her much-loved and esteemed nephew had betrayed her confidence!" (Heir, 93)

Laura, too, is wrong to engage in concealment. But her guilt is somewhat different; it arises from ignorance. "Never had a promise of love been made with less knowledge of what it amounted to," (Heir, 94) says Miss Yonge of Laura. For Laura "did not know what she had done" (Heir, 94) by promising secrecy. She was not in the habit of questioning Philip's statements, "she had so learnt to

surrender her opinions to Philip, and to believe him always right, that she would never have dreamt of questioning wherever he might choose to lead her." (Heir, 94) In effect Laura has put consideration for Philip ahead of consideration for or rather duty to her parents. Clearly, because of the subject, "it was her duty to make this conversation known," (Heir, 95) but Laura does not do so because "she did not awaken her mind to consider that anything could be wrong that Philip desired." (Heir, 95)

Philip blinds himself to his duty to the Edmonstones by deceiving himself with a technicality. He muses that with Laura he has a "private understanding" (Heir, 93) not an engagement. It is both pride and prudence that cause Philip to deceive the Edmonstones. "He could not bear to be rejected by her parents" (Heir, 93) because of his poverty and so pride dictates silence. In addition "secrecy was the only way of preserving his intercourse with her on the same footing and exerting his influence over the family." (Heir, 93) Later he tells Laura that "you might marry tomorrow and I should have no right to complain." (Heir, 210) But although they have no secret engagement they know of their love for one another and their mutual commitment for the future which is as good as an engagement. Philip's silence and therefore his lack of dutiful behaviour towards the Edmonstones arises from "self-deception." (Heir, 93)

Not only does the deception entangle Philip in a web of moral wrong but it also smooths the way for his growing persecution of Guy. Because Philip sets aside his duty to his aunt and uncle, his judgement in all matters of duty becomes tainted.

In contrast to Laura, Amy behaves dutifully. She places her parents' feelings first until her marriage. The courtship of Amy and Guy progresses innocently as the two share many interests. Amy

> was constantly with Guy. Reading and music, roses, botany, and walks on the terrace! She [Mrs. Edmonstone] looked back, and it was still the same. Last Easter vacation, how they used to study the stars in the evening, to linger in the greenhouse in the morning nursing the geraniums, and to practice singing over the schoolroom piano; how, in a long walk, they always paired together; and how they seemed to share every pursuit or pleasure. (Heir, 156)

This idyllic state changes abruptly when Mrs. Edmonstone suddenly realizes how much time the two spend together. She suggests to Amy that it would be more maidenly for her to have less of Guy's attention. However by drawing back Amy only serves to awaken Guy to a full appreciation of his feeling for her. This he expresses to Amy: "I don't know how long it has been, but almost ever since I came here, a feeling has been growing up in me towards you, such as I can never have for anyone else." (Heir, 146) At the same time Guy realizes that he has an obligation to her parents. He says, "I speak now, because I ought not to remain here with such feelings unknown to your father and mother." (Heir, 147)

Amy's impulse, unlike that of Laura, is to rush with the happy news to her mother, "breathless and crimson, she darted into the dressing room, threw herself on her knees, and with her face hidden in her mother's lap, explained, in panting, half-smothered whispers . . . 'O mamma, mamma, he says--he says he loves me!" (Heir, 147)

Just as dutifully Guy also goes to Mrs. Edmonstone, "almost at the same moment the door opened, and Guy stood before her. . . ." (Heir, 147) Mrs. Edmonstone, who seems to have precipitated the declaration, felt "gratified by the free confidence with which both had at once hastened to pour out all to her, not merely as a duty, but in the full ebullition of their warm young love." (Heir, 147-8) Mrs. Edmonstone may therefore rejoice with Amy as she will never be able to do with Laura. At this point the innocent manner of Guy and Amy contrasts greatly with the false demeanor which Philip and Laura have assumed since their woodland episode.

At first, as we have seen, Mr. and Mrs. Edmonstone accept Guy with delight. Then almost immediately follows a winter of sadness occasioned by the false charges of gambling levelled at Guy. Mr. Edmonstone declares the engagement off and asks Amy to think no more about Guy. In obedience to her father Amy attempts to do so, except in so far as she prays for Guy. It is a sad winter for Laura as well as for Amy. It has been some time since Philip's declaration of love but the knowledge of his commitment has not brought happiness to Laura. Instead she has become harassed and careworn as a result of the subterfuge and reserve she must observe in order to keep their attachment a secret. Yet she does not realize that her unhappiness arises from the secrecy which makes it impossible for her to be open with her mother. Laura has "failed in a daughter's part," (Heir, 461)

and her sadness during the winter is even greater than Amy's because Amy at least has her mother's confidence. Miss Yonge illustrates Amy's firm resolve to be obedient when she refuses to send a message to Guy in her brother's letter. In exasperation Charles demands, "why can't you send one word to comfort him?" and Amy answers, "It would not comfort him to think me disobedient." (Heir, 187)

The drawbacks of disobedience apparently do not at first occur to Philip and Laura even though they no longer share each other's company as innocently as once they did. Philip even avoids visiting Hollywell, and when he does visit he avoids private contact with Laura lest someone guess of their mutual affection. Their restraint contrasts with the open and innocent happiness with which Guy and Amy share each other's company once the banishment ends.

Guy and Amy's marriage, the result of dutiful behaviour, has Miss Yonge's blessing as well as the Edmonstones'. To highlight the occasion the authoress adorns the wedding scene with a stroke of symbolic coincidence:

> It was a showery day, with gleams of vivid sunshine, and one of these suddenly broke forth, casting a stream of colour from a martyr's figure in the south window, so as to shed a golden glory on the wave of brown hair over Guy's forehead, then passing on and tinting the bride's white veil with a deep glowing shade of crimson and purple. (Heir, 298)

The choice of the martyr figure is not meant to be lost on the reader, foreshadowing, as it does, the almost inevitable doom of a true Christian hero.

The events which lead up to Laura and Philip's wedding show that it will not be an occasion so blessed. Laura and Philip independently confess their attachment, Philip while lying gravely ill in the Austrian Tyrol. Fearing death he admits the truth of the situation and confesses to Guy, "We have been engaged this long time." (Heir, 324) He sends a message of love to Laura and he tells Guy that "It was very wrong; it was not her fault. . . ." (Heir, 324) In England Laura, also fearing Philip's death, breaks down in despair and finally confesses to her mother. However Laura does not admit to the disobedience in the relationship. "It is no engagement," she tells her mother. "He would never have asked that without papa's consent. We are only bound by our own hearts." (Heir, 347) Even when her mother rebukes her with "keeping up a system of disobedience and concealment" (Heir, 347) Laura does not realize how she has been led astray and how she has wronged her mother.

The revelation of their error which comes to Philip while he lays ill, only comes to Laura on her wedding day. She weeps and pleads to her mother, "Your pardon: O, mamma, I see it all now:" (Heir, 461) The moral failure of the couple weighs on the spirits of those assembled for the wedding. There is "no such air of freshness, youth, and peace" (Heir, 461) as there was at Guy and Amy's wedding.

> He was, indeed, a very fine-looking man, his countenance more noble than it had ever been, though pale and not only betraying the present suffering of the throbbing, burning brow, but

> with the appearance of a care-worn harassed man, looking more as if his age was five-and-thirty than eight-and-twenty. And she, in her plain white muslin and quiet bonnet, was hardly bridal-looking in dress, and so it was with her face, still beautiful and brilliant in complexion, but with the weight of care permanent on it, and all the shades of feeling concealed by a fixed command of countenance, unable, however, to hide the oppression of dejection and anxiety.
>
> Yet to the eyes that only beheld the surface, there was nothing but prosperity and happiness in a marriage between a pair who had loved so long and devotedly, and after going through so much for each other's sake, were united at length, with wealth, honour, and distinction before them. (Heir, 461)

Philip's cares, of course, are magnified because he takes his bride to live in a house inherited from the man whose death he caused.

Lest the reader fail to appreciate the enormity of the error, Miss Yonge sharpens the moral lesson by showing that perhaps the most serious result of erroneous behaviour is that it encourages others to imitate it. In a subplot which blossoms just before the wedding of Philip and Laura and just before the close of the novel, she draws a parallel and almost a parody of their courtship. In this way she increases the moral responsibility of the couple and the subplot also serves to instruct Laura in the error of her ways.

In Ireland, where the Edmonstones visit relatives, Laura's cousin, Lady Eveleen, becomes attached to her brother's penniless tutor. They anticipate parental disapproval, as Philip did, because the tutor has no prospect of a fortune. When the attachment comes to

light, and the suitor is dismissed, Lady Eveleen carries on a clandestine correspondence in the belief that Laura and Philip must have done the same thing. Eveleen reasons that because Laura erred in one way, she must have erred in this second way. Not until Laura realizes how her behaviour has influenced Eveleen does she realize on her wedding day, as we have already seen, how greatly she has sinned. She finally understands that the behaviour which she did not consider undutiful could and did seem so to someone else.

Eveleen's parents consent to her marriage because they believe that she has committed herself to the tutor by the correspondence. The sage Charles pronounces the moral lesson. He remarks that Philip and Laura set a bad example by their disobedience because

> "Light-minded people see the sin, but not the repentance, so they imitate the one without being capable of the other. Here are Philip and Laura finishing off like the end of a novel, fortune and all, and setting a very bad example to the world in general." (Heir, 452)

Thus Laura's failure in duty causes more than her own unhappiness because Miss Yonge hints that Eveleen and her husband will have a difficult time financially, and so she gives additional weight to her argument in favour of dutiful behaviour. The contrast between Amy, widowed but consoled in her parents' home, and Philip, married but dejected as the result of his failure in judgement both in respect to Guy and to Laura, is striking enough, to which may be added the grief of Laura when she acknowledges her own error and the misery

it has caused Philip. "If I had only at first told mamma, he would not have been blamed; he would have been spared half this suffering and self-reproach; he would have loved me more; Eva might not have been led astray; at least she could not have laid it to my charge," (Heir, 455) Laura sobs on her wedding day, drawing the third theme and the novel to a suitable close.

# C H A P T E R  V

## WOMANHOOD

### i

### Introduction

Among Miss Yonge's domestic works there are three novels which may be loosely but conveniently grouped together because all three contain lessons for women. This descriptive heading leaves room for much variety, for the novels to be discussed in this chapter, Heartsease (1854), The Clever Woman of the Family (1865) and The Three Brides (1876), do not share such a well-defined and specific group of characteristics as do, for example, the family chronicles. They all, however, contain moral lessons based on adult life and responsibilities, concentrate on women characters, and, taken together, show some changes in social attitudes during the period they cover. They are also among the best examples of Miss Yonge's story telling ability.

They also provide very good examples of the four kinds of wives discussed in Womankind. In Heartsease, the heroine Violet, at some times both "a cowed woman" and "a deadweight" recovers to become "a helpmeet". In both The Clever Woman of the Family and The Three Brides we encounter women who either are or aspire to be "maîtresse femmes", Rachel in the former novel and Cecil

in the latter. In all three novels the superiority of "the helpmeet" is made abundantly clear.

As in all her domestic novels, Miss Yonge focuses her attention in these works on the notions of duty and obedience and shows how they effect the behaviour of her characters. In these adult novels, however, the nature and treatment of the concepts is necessarily more complex than in the lessons for young people. In particular, for a woman the notion of duty embraces the idea that if she does not know what her duty is, she is obliged to discover it. As there are many options open to a woman, Miss Yonge was able to create both a variety of women and a variety of situations in which to place them. Some of the women characters successfully discern and then carry out their duties, but others either abandon duty, or mistake their duty or apply themselves injudiciously to its supposed dictates.

Similarly the notion of obedience is not the same for a woman as for a child. For children the requirement of obedience is fulfilled by the exact performance of a parent's command. But a woman has an opportunity for independent behaviour, especially in the performance of her domestic role. Therefore obedience to either parent or husband may require that her own decisions be overruled and personal desires be subdued in order to fulfil the obligations of domestic life. Thus the virtue of obedience in Charlotte Yonge's women characters may be seen in another light as submission, for it connotes the voluntary subjection of self to husband or parent. Again, because of the voluntary aspect of submission, the

necessity for it must first be recognized before a woman can attempt to embrace it.

The notions of duty and obedience, and especially obedience in its submissive aspect, were increasingly challenged during the second half of the nineteenth century. It is important to note that each of the novels dealt with in this chapter was published in a different decade. They reflect the sometimes subtle changes in attitude which were occurring. Heartsease, published in the fifties, reflects the apparent stability of the decade, the height or "High Noon" of the Victorian era.[1] The generally accepted standards of society were unquestioned and within this rigid framework, the heroine, Violet Martindale, first discovers what duties are expected of her and then, with help from church ordinances, attempts, on the whole successfully, to live up to the standard she has embraced.

Several of the characters in The Clever Woman of the Family, published in the sixties, question the standards of behaviour that are taken for granted in Heartsease. In this novel Miss Yonge shows that she was aware of the existence of a "modern" code of feminine behaviour, a code which permitted women to function independently of the control of their menfolk or the church. Not surprisingly, Miss Yonge frustrates her heroine's every attempt at innovation but she does so with a certain amount of humour and understanding.

[1] G. Kitson Clark, The Making of Victorian England, p. 31.

Furthermore at the end of the novel she redeems her heroine, Rachel Curtis, to a happy and voluntarily submissive life. Rachel's progress to this happy state is marked first by revolt, then by a gradual recognition of the virtues of the old domestic code and finally by a return to its ways.

By the seventies the new ideas had become more entrenched and too serious for Miss Yonge to favour with a lighthearted treatment. The Three Brides, published in the mid-seventies, looks at a variety of women, modern and traditional, independent and dependent. The superiority of the old ways is demonstrated in part by the fates which befall the three brides of the title. One fails in her duty because of independence, one sees the error of her independent ways and reforms, and one, a colonial, comes to an understanding of the essentials of duty and obedience in the Mother Country. Almost all of the mistakes that the three brides make are blamed on the new permissive attitudes. Even so the novel is not as tidily concluded, as is, for instance, The Clever Woman, and this reflects the widespread existence of ideas which Miss Yonge could not in all conscience condemn out of hand.

The fact that these three novels are concerned with such a drastic change in attitudes over three decades reflects the accuracy and honesty with which Miss Yonge depicted contemporary middle-class Victorian life. She did so even though her own code of conduct became more and more out of fashion as time went on, and

the implications of the new code more and more distasteful to her. Heartsease, because it affords us the most detailed and complete picture of Miss Yonge's ideals and their effect on her characters, provides a standard against which we can measure the process and rate of change in the other two novels. It is to Heartsease that we first turn.

ii

## Heartsease; or, The Brother's Wife

Violet Martindale has two tasks to perform, as suggested by the full title of the novel, Heartsease; or, The Brother's Wife (1854). The flower heartsease is a member of the viola family and it grows in a variety of colours including violet. The connection between the colour violet and the flower heartsease points to the main task of the heroine, Violet, which is to bring "ease of heart" to a number of the other characters, including her husband and his parents. At the outset of the novel the task seems to be beyond the capacity of the gentle, weak Violet, for her husband's family give the bride a cool reception. Arthur Martindale kept his marriage a secret from his parents because of the great differences in rank and fortune between himself, the second son of Lord and Lady Martindale, and Violet, the daughter of a country lawyer. Indeed the Martindale family have no reason to be favourably disposed towards the new Mrs. Martindale.

Violet's second task is indicated by the subtitle, The Brother's Wife. It arises from the fact that she has become wife to Theodora Martindale's favourite brother. Theodora takes offence at the sudden and secret marriage for which she, like everyone else, was neither prepared nor consulted. Arthur adds to her sense of injury because he does not realize what it is that causes his sister's coolness, and therefore does not try to make amends. In consequence Theodora treats her new sister-in-law with hostility and even contempt as the result of her anger and jealousy. Furthermore the two women are very different in character and have little in common. Violet is gentle, shrinking and even weak in character, whereas Theodora is forceful, independent and strongwilled. In time Violet will bring "ease of heart" to Theodora, but first Violet must overcome the hostility of her sister-in-law, win her confidence, and, ultimately, help influence her to the good. This is Violet's second task which is indicated by The Brother's Wife. Both this task and the task of bringihg comfort to the Martindales appear to be extremely difficult if not impossible.

If, in the main, Heartsease deals with the difficulties which confront the fragile young heroine, it is also very much the story of her husband's sister, who experiences difficulties and undergoes a character development which contrasts sharply with the difficulties and development experienced by Violet. Theodora's story serves to stress the moral lesson in womanly behaviour which the novel illustrates. The lesson is concerned specifically with

the virtues of submission and submissive behaviour. One character calls it the "subjection of wills"[2] and this is an indication of how Violet and Theodora are called upon to acknowledge the duty of a woman to submit her life to the comfort and pleasure of husband or parents. The widely differing personalities of the two women illustrate the moral lesson in different ways. Violet has to learn the appropriate form of submission which includes the necessity on her part of presenting a cheerful demeanor even under difficult circumstances. Theodora, on the other hand, has to learn to give consideration to her parents' comfort and to the wishes of her suitor rather than to indulge her own every whim. Miss Yonge illustrates the lesson in detail through the lives of both women and this is the aspect of the novel which will engage our attention.

After a short visit at the Martindale country estate, Arthur and Violet set up housekeeping in London where Arthur's regiment has been stationed. In London Violet meets with great difficulties for she is not at all prepared for her new duties as a married woman in a higher level of society than that in which she was born. Violet is also a very young wife. She turned sixteen on her wedding day, and she was married after so brief a courtship that her mother fears she will be a "giddy young housekeeper." (Heartsease, 12)

[2] C. M. Yonge, Heartsease; or, The Brother's Wife (London: Macmillan and Co. Ltd., 1902), p. 130. Hereafter all quotations from this novel in this chapter will be followed by Heartsease and a page number in parenthesis.

Arthur increases Violet's difficulties because he will not help her with the perplexities of her new office. In answer to a casual remark about her lack of knowledge Arthur answers, "No housekeeping affairs for me. Whatever happens, keep your own counsel." (Heartsease, 20) His general unconcern is one of the sources of Violet's unhappiness and there are many other instances of Arthur's general neglect of his wife. In London he returns to the friends and occupations of his bachelor days, and Violet leads a lonely life with no one to turn to in her troubles. She becomes depressed and is unable to raise her spirits because she has no source of strength. She is yet unaware of the wifely duty of cheerfulness. Furthermore, Violet does not yet know that religion is the source of the strength she needs.

> She did not know the use of change of scene, and the bracing effect of resolution,--she had no experience of self-management, and had not learnt that it was a duty not to let herself pine. Though most conscientious, she had not yet grown up to understand religion as a present comfort. To her it was a guide and an obligation, and as such she obeyed its dictates, to the best of her power, but only as an obedient child, without understanding the immediate reward in this life, namely, confidence, support, and peace. It is a feeling generally belonging to an age beyond hers, though only to be won by faithful discipline. She was walking in darkness, and, by and by, light might come. (Heartsease, 72)

Violet's situation as she awaits the birth of her first child is not a happy one. Alone, and without the consolation of deeply held religious beliefs, her submission to the circumstances of her life lacks strength of purpose. It is essentially negative. Indeed she has no understanding

of the positive aspects of dutiful submission and although outwardly very submissive, she makes little attempt to make the best of her circumstances and thus fails to act in a truly submissive manner. Indeed she allows herself to remain in low spirits, to pine and to be prone to hysterics. It is no surprise that both she and her first-born, Johnny, come close to death during her confinement. However her suffering has absolved her from her errors and help is at hand.

One person in the Martindale family appreciates the difficulty of Violet's position from the first and that is John, Arthur's older brother. John has himself had to endure severe trials in his life. He was engaged for eight years to Helen Fotheringham. They were unable to marry during that time because Helen had accepted the duty of caring for her dying grandparents. By the time both died, she herself had contracted a fatal illness. Neither John nor Helen harboured resentment towards the two old people who had in fact ruined their chance of marriage. John honours Helen for her devotion to duty and he wishes to use the example of Helen's life, her submission to known duties, in order to help Violet to understand what is demanded of her. "Violet has energy conscientiousness, high principle to act, but she does not know how to apply the same principle to enable her to endure. She knows religion as a guide, not as a comfort. She had not grown up to it, poor thing, before her need came." (Heartsease, 124) John also realizes that no one else can or will help Violet: "Arthur cannot help her; Theodora will not if she could; she is

left to me. And can I take Helen's work on myself and try to lead our poor young sister to what alone can support her? I must try--mere humanity demands it." (Heartsease, 124)

In order to help Violet, John overcomes his reluctance to utter Helen's name. He takes Violet and her son, Johnny, to convalesce on the Isle of Wight and there he not only tells Violet about Helen's life and their engagement, but he also allows Violet to read Helen's letters. Because Violet understands the circumstances in which the letters were written, she can appreciate the cheerful manner in which Helen endured her captivity. The letters and her knowledge of Helen give Violet the example she needs in order to endure better her own hardships. "As she dwelt on them /Helen's letters/, the perception grew on her, that not only was it a duty to strive for contentment, but that to look on all trials as crosses to be borne daily, was the only way to obtain it." (Heartsease, 135) As tangible evidence of Helen's example John gives to Violet a cross of coral, the first gift he had given to Helen which she returned to him on her deathbed. John recalls "She held up to me that cross--that first gift--she bade me think of the subjection of wills and affections it betokened." (Heartsease, 130) The cross connects the duty of submission, which Helen calls the "subjection of wills," with religion. For as John has already realized, Violet needed, as much as anything, to learn the value of religion as a comfort.

John does not continue to guide Violet's development. Soon after their holiday together he departs for the West Indies for an extended visit to the family property. But his influence is nevertheless strong, as is the influence of the dead Helen. Miss Yonge believed that the example of the lives of good people could have a strong influence. She makes this point forcefully in the character of Helen. However, it is important to note that Violet is susceptible to the right kind of influence. She always wishes to do what is right and she has a strong sense of duty. Early in the novel, when she learns for the first time that the Martindales had not consented to her marriage, she declares to John Martindale: "I'll try to do my very best!" (Heartsease, 19) She stoutly declares on another occasion: "I thought if one saw a duty one must try to practise it." (Heartsease, 42)

Once she becomes aware of Helen's example, Violet recognizes that it is her duty, too, to submit to whatever calamities might befall her. Miss Yonge thereafter accentuates Violet's domestic trials and shows that she is more religious than before, but, in keeping with Keble's instructions,[3] Miss Yonge does not detail Violet's religious life. Her situation becomes more difficult as Arthur increasingly neglects his family, and Violet uses her new found appreciation and understanding of her duty as a means of gathering the strength needed to weather

[3]Battiscombe, Charlotte Mary Yonge, p. 53. Keble's warning "against too much talk and discussion of Church matters. . . ."

each new trial. Miss Yonge does not censure Arthur for his careless domestic life. She does not judge him for gambling at horses and cards even though the family experiences serious financial difficulty as the result of his thoughless behaviour. Instead Violet uses each instance of unsatisfactory behaviour as a cross which must be borne because it is her duty to strive for contentment. Violet, it is clear, is well on the way to becoming an ideal, gentle, submissive wife, the helpmeet of Womankind.

The contrast with Theodora is great. Theodora, unlike Violet, will not at first accept anyone else's authority or guidance. Theodora, who is three years older than Violet, has never placed herself under her father's guidance. The one person whose direction she tries to accept, on their engagement, is Percy Fotheringham, Helen's brother. Percy proposes to Theodora by exlaiming "Theodora, Theodora, you are a grand creature, nearly thrown away for want of breaking in." (Heartsease, 174) Percy assumes the authority of a male and thinks he can help Theodora to "crush the serpents" in order to "bring out all that is excellent." (Heartsease, 174) He would like to see corrected "the flaws in that noble nature" (Heartsease, 174), but he does not explicitly describe either the flaws or the serpent in Theodora's character. We may suppose that Percy refers to Theodora's independent behaviour and her disregard for her parents who, in fact, do not seem to require much in the way of filial duty and obedience. The real difficulty which confronts Theodora,

however, is submission, a duty which she will not acknowledge because of her pride. Her lack of submission may be the gravest "flaw" in her character.

Although Theodora accepts Percy's proposal of marriage she does not improve her behaviour. Even in London, when she visits Arthur and Violet, she refuses to curb herself. The sisters-in-law become friends over their mutual admiration for the little Johnny, after Violet had earlier smoothed the way toward their friendship by reconciling Arthur and his sister. Thus Violet overcomes the hostility that Theordora had felt for her. But it is a long time before she can exert influence over her wilful sister-in-law and be a blessing to her, and thereby accomplish the task suggested by the subtitle. Theodora continues to believe that Violet is weak and it is only after a conflict between them over matters of propriety, that she realizes that this is not so.

Theodora accepts an invitation to a soirée, although Arthur cannot attend her and Percy, her fiancee, will not. Percy's reason is that he does not approve of a former friend of Theodora's, Georgina Gardner, who will also be at the event. Georgina married for money and carries on with disreputable people. Percy declares, "I will not enter into any intercourse I can avoid with persons whose conduct I disapprove." (Heartsease, 208) However, Theodora does not want to slight her former friend, and insists on attending. Out of a sense of duty Violet, although she is unwell, feels obliged to chaperone Theodora. "It was her duty, as long as it was in her power, to be with her husband's sister, and guard her

from lowering herself by her associates." (Heartsease, 226-7) The soirée takes place on a hot summer night and Violet is overcome and faints. Theodora is almost overcome herself, by remorse, "but /is/ also provoked, at having been put in the wrong." (Heartsease, 250) Thus, although savagely attacked by Arthur for having nearly "done for" his wife, when another invitation arrives from Georgina to attend a picnic, she accepts. Nor does she make any attempt to submit to the judgment of her fiancé concerning the matter.

Violet again feels obliged to chaperone Theodora. She is still not well, however, and Arthur is again not available to escort his sister. So Violet induces Theodora to forego the event by suggesting that she write to Theodora's parents to get their approval. Theodora dislikes this idea so much that she yields to Violet. Upon reflection Theodora admits to herself that Violet has gained the point through strength and not from weakness.

> But candour was obliged to acknowledge that it had not been feebleness that had been the conqueror. Violet had made no demonstration of going into fits; it had been her resolution, her strength, not her weakness, that had gained the victory. Chafe as Theodora might, she could not rid herself of the consciousness that the sister of that underbred attorney--that timid, delicate, soft, shrinking being, so much her junior--had dared to grapple with her fixed determination, and had gained an absolute conquest. (Heartsease, 241-2)

Percy feels grateful to Violet who, he says "has a will, but knows how to resign it." (Heartsease, 247) The contrast of Violet with Theodora is very great.

Percy perceives that Theodora not only lacks humility and submissive qualities in general but is also capable of and indeed guilty of wilful and hence disobedient behaviour.

> "You have a noble nature, but you will not check yourself, will not control your pride; you cannot bear any attempt to curb you. You are proud of it; but I tell you, Theodora, it is not high spirit, it is absolute sinful temper. If no one else will tell you so, I must." (Heartsease, 248)

In a moment of humility Theodora asks, "Are humility and submission my cross?" and Percy replies that they are "the secret of peace." (Heartsease, 248)

Theodora seems to be happier for a time but she has not properly learned the essential lesson of submission. She had been subdued by Violet's will but as Percy indicates she herself must impose submission upon herself. Here as on another occasion when Theodora submits to Violet, "the subjection was merely a caprice, it was no conquest of self will." (Heartsease, 253) The confrontation with Violet was only the prelude to a more serious wilful act. Theodora meets her friend Georgina again, and agrees to join her at the Derby. However, shortly after making this arrangement she learns that Percy's aunt will be in London on the same day and that Percy especially wishes her to meet the woman who brought him up. But Theodora will not subdue her will; pride dictates her course of action. She will not consider Percy's claim to her time and she attends the Derby. In consequence Percy breaks the engagement. Theodora explains

to her parents that Percy "tried to exercise a control over my actions to which I could not submit. . . ." (Heartsease, 261)

Theodora is apparently intractable. Unlike Violet who sought her rightful duty, Theodora refuses even to acknowledge the possibility of a better course of behaviour than that dictated by her own will. However, Violet's good example is working as a leavening in Theodora's soul. It is only Theodora's obtuseness and unreasonable stubbornness and pride which cause her to resist the beneficial influence of her sister-in-law. To expiate her wilfulness, therefore, Theodora has to suffer several unpleasant experiences. The first is the unavoidable, if unacknowledged misery that the broken engagement causes her. The second is the realisation, long in coming, that by going to the Derby and inducing Arthur to accompany her, she led him directly into temptation. "Little was needed to rouse in Arthur the dormant taste /for gambling/ so long the prevalent one." (Heartsease, 254) Her responsibility for this disastrous turn of events is undeniable, especially as Arthur himself warned her of the danger. He tells her "whatever comes of it, 'tis your doing, not mine." (Heartsease, 254) His words are answered with a haughty smile, but they are words which she is never to forget.

The third unpleasant experience is a flirtation which she has with Lord St. Erme. Lord and Lady Martindale take Theodora to Europe where she meets the artistic peer. She wilfully leads him on to believe that the flirtation is actually courtship and when, after rejecting his

earnest advances, she realises the pain she has caused him, she is filled with remorse. The remorse marks the first occasion when Theodora is able to fully comprehend both the nature and consequences of a wilful act of her own. She is driven by her remorse to seek direction and solace from her father's cousin, a vicar. Thus like Violet she comes to appreciate the consolations of religion.

The redemption of Theodora is almost complete and it is hastened by a fourth event, a disastrous fire which destroys the Martindale mansion. Theodora behaves heroically but is quite badly burned in the course of several heroic rescues that she effects. Her injuries force her for the first time to admit her essential feminity and womanly weakness. "'How base it is,' said she, 'not to be able to do a few hours' work without having to take to one's bed. I flattered myself I was not so despicably weak, for a woman.'" (Heartsease, 337) Her physical submission to pain and weakness is indicative of her potential for moral submission to husband and duties. Ironically her true feminity surfaces only after she has lost her looks by reason of her burns. Later when Percy visits the Martindales in London on a matter concerning Arthur's debts, he fails at first to recognize her. However, there is no doubt of the eventual outcome of the courtship and when their troth is finally plighted Theodora makes full amends for her previous want of submission and admits that "I was unbearable. No man of sense or spirit could be expected to endure such treatment. . . . I have been very unhappy about it. . . ." (Heartsease, 424)

During the progress of Theodora's redemption and courtship Violet's situation worsens dramatically starting with the Derby, which Arthur attends with Theodora. The horse racing and betting unsettle Arthur's mind and he embarks on a course of reprehensible behaviour. As we have noted, Theodora's awful responsibility for the subsequent disasters which befall her brother and his wife cannot be denied. The new and extremely difficult trials serve to test the strength of Violet's submissiveness. For not only does Arthur gamble away their money but he also loses his good health, just as Violet gives birth to their fourth child. Percy Fotheringham saves Arthur from imminent physical and financial disaster but it is left to Violet and their children to effect a spiritual rescue. Bleak as the picture is, as Arthur's health deteriorates alarmingly, there is yet a sense of hope as he reposes in the bosom of his family. Arthur's collapse is also the most severe test of Violet's growing strength and resolution.

> Never had the future looked so desolate; but sufficient unto the day was the evil thereof. She had the root of peace and strength, and had long been trained in patient trust and endurance. To pray, to strive, to dwell on words of comfort, to bear in mind the blessings of the cross, to turn resolutely from gloomy contemplations, and to receive thankfully each present solace--these were the tasks she set herself, and they bore the fruit of consolation and hidden support. Her boy's affection and goodness, the beauty and high health of her little girls, and the kindlier moments when Arthur's better nature shone out, were balm and refreshment, because she accepted them as gifts from the Fatherly Hand that laid the trial upon her. (Heartsease, 363)

In her worst hours, moreover, Violet's submission reaps a further reward for she influences Arthur, by her example of goodness, to a better state of mind. Until his illness, Arthur would not attend religious worship with Violet. "She could not seek counsel or comfort from above, she could not offer prayer or thanksgiving, she could not join in the highest Feast, without finding herself left alone, in a region whither he would not follow." (Heartsease, 304) After the ordeal, however, Arthur admits "I have never thought enough of these things. . . ." (Heartsease, 455) Arthur's new interest in church ordinances marks his new more general interest in duty per se. In fact Arthur does not reform to any great extent but after turning to the church he abandons his worst forms of behaviour.

At the end of the novel John Martindale returns from the West Indies. His re-appearance conveniently allows the authoress to note the results of the gradual changes that have taken place in the five years of his absence. When he left, Violet was just beginning to understand her new duties. Upon his return he finds that she has mastered them and accomplished many good deeds. She has helped to soften Theodora and reunite her with Percy. She has helped bring Arthur to a better frame of mind. She has become strong by enduring many trials and hardships. All are positive results of her acceptance of a submissive role. Furthermore Violet and her children have gradually won the hearts of Lord and Lady Martindale. Lord Martindale confesses to Arthur that "To have your dear Violet for the daughter of our old age, and your

children round us, would, as John says, leave us nothing to wish." (Heartsease, 473)

Thus at the end of the novel Violet has become "our Heartsease" (Heartsease, 426) and has successfully accomplished her most important task. Percy explains to John the influence of Violet's goodness:

> "The history of these years is this," said Percy, making an emphatic mark on the gravel with his stick. "Every one else has acted, more or less, idiotically. She has gone about softening, healing, guarding, stirring up the saving part of each one's disposition. If, as she avers, you and Helen formed her, you gave a blessing to all of us." (Heartsease, 458)

Both the main female characters in the end embrace the same standard of duty. No other standard is ever suggested as being acceptable. The only topical controversy taken up in the novel, by which it can be dated, is the flirtation of two minor women characters with Roman Catholicism. Other than this middle class society seems secure in its standards and in no danger from divisive ideas.

iii

## The Clever Woman of the Family

Rachel Curtis, the heroine of The Clever Woman of the Family (1865), has an attitude very different from that of Violet Martindale. Violet sought to fulfil her duties within her domestic environment. Rachel, in contrast, looks for some activity beyond the confines of her home, an activity which will be beneficial to humanity and which will occupy her unused time and energy. She

declares this intention quite emphatically to her elder sister Grace on the occasion of her twenty-fifth birthday. It is the scene which opens the novel.

> "Not a paper do I take up but I see something about wretchedness and crime, and here I sit with health, strength, and knowledge, and able to do nothing, nothing-- at the risk of breaking my mother's heart! I have pottered about cottages and taught at schools in the dilettante way of the young lady who thinks it her duty to be charitable; and I am told that it is my duty, and that I may be satisfied. Satisfied, when I see children cramped in soul, destroyed in body, that fine ladies may wear lace trimmings! Satisfied with the blight of the most promising buds! Satisfied, when I know that every alley and lane of town or country reeks with vice and corruption, and that there is one cry for workers with brains and with purses! And here I am, able and willing, only longing to task myself to the uttermost, yet tethered down to the merest mockery of usefulness by conventionalities. I am a young lady forsooth!--I must not be out late; I must not put forth my views; I must not choose my acquaintance; I must be a mere helpless, useless being, growing old in a ridiculous fiction of prolonged childhood, affecting those graces of so-called sweet seventeen that I never had--because, because why? Is it for any better reason than because no mother can bear to believe her daughter no longer on the lists for matrimony? Our dear mother does not tell herself that this is the reason, but she is unconsciously actuated by it. And I have hitherto given way to her wish. I mean to give way still in a measure; but I am five-and-twenty, and I will no longer be withheld from some path of usefulness! I will judge for myself, and when my mission has declared itself, I will not be withheld from it by any scruple that does not approve itself to my reason and conscience."[4]

Miss Yonge's treatment of Rachel Curtis is critical yet kind. We may therefore presume that Charlotte Yonge felt

[4] C. M. Yonge, The Clever Woman of the Family (London: Macmillan and Co. Ltd., 1915), p. 5. Hereafter all quotations from this novel in this chapter will be followed by Clever and a page number in parenthesis.

sympathy for the energetic and philanthropically oriented character she had created, although she also believed Rachel's behaviour to be wrong in most instances. Certainly Rachel's motives are of the highest order. She wishes to help the young girls who so arduously make lace and she sees that there is much room for improvement in every "alley and lane of town or country." Yet certain phrases in Rachel's declaration warn the wary reader that it will be Rachel Curtis who learns the lesson incorporated in the story of The Clever Woman. For Rachel has decided to "judge for myself"[5] and to decide on a philanthropic course, which she terms "my mission," by her own "reason and conscience." In effect Rachel says that she will decide on important matters without reference to her mother, her curate or to any other authority. It is an independent move by Rachel and we may safely predict that her "mission," whatever it may be, will end in failure.

The fact that Rachel can espouse an independent course of action demonstrates the subtle change in attitude towards women's sphere of activity in the eleven years since the publication of Heartsease. In the earlier novel there is no question of any but a domestic basis for duty and obedience for the heroines Violet and Theodora. Violet, of course, had to attend to the health and education of her children. But even Theodora, who had an interest in the village schools, rooted her activities in the estate life of her parents. Rachel, on the other hand, seeks a mission outside her home life and also intends to judge for herself on matters other than those of a domestic nature.

[5] Compare with Elizabeth Woodbourne who says, "It was relying on my own judgment that led me astray." Abbeychurch, p. 211.

It is, in fact, independent feminine behaviour which Miss Yonge wishes to show to be wrong in The Clever Woman of the Family. This she does largely through the actions taken by Rachel in the course of the novel. The specific lesson incorporated in this tale is difficult to define exactly. However, an examination of the title of the novel helps bring it to light. One might assume that "the clever woman of the family" is Rachel Curtis, and there is much in the way of evidence to support Rachel's claim to the title. One character speaks of Rachel as "being considered as the clever woman of the family," (Clever, 96) and this is the reputation which Rachel has in her own family and in the genteel society of Avonmouth. Her reputation arises from the fact that Rachel has studied several languages including Greek, from the fact that she orders a great number of books from the club to which she and her acquaintances belong, and from the fact that, as the same observer notes, there is "no man nearly connected enough to keep her in check," and furthermore that she lives "in society that does not fairly meet her." (Clever, 96)

The circumstances of Rachel's life have favoured the development of her reputation for cleverness. Her father has been dead for many years and she has no brother or other male relative or friend to "keep her in check." Furthermore the curate of the parish church is beneath her consideration. He has no intellectual prowess by which he might impose his authority over her, and, in addition, he is from the lower classes and not quite a gentleman. Thus it would seem that Rachel Curtis is indeed the clever woman of the family.

However there is another candidate to be considered. Just as there are two women whose developments differ and who together illustrate the lesson of submission to domestic duties in Heartsease, so there are two women whose developments contrast and who together illustrate the lesson inherent in The Clever Woman. The contrast of women characters in the second novel is a subtle one for the complementary woman character. Ermine Williams, is a "clever woman" in her own family and so the question arises as to which of the two women is really the clever woman.

Ermine Williams is an invalid, a few years older than Rachel, who lives in Avonmouth with her sister Aileen, a governess, and their young niece, Rose. The sisters and child live in sadly reduced circumstances owing to the financial loss suffered in a swindle by their brother, Rose's father, some years before. Charlotte Yonge deals with the intrigue of the swindle but as it is not the main plot nor incorporated in the lesson, it will not be discussed here.

The heroines are similar in several respects. Ermine, like Rachel, has no male relation or friend to guide her behaviour, that is, to "keep her in check." Although their resulting behaviour appears to be much different, Ermine sees that she would be like Rachel if, earlier in her life, she had not had the guidance of male authority. Ermine says that Rachel "is just what I should have been without papa and Edward /her brother/ to keep me down... ." (Clever, 95) Both women have an interest in the plight of the poor. Ermine sympathises with the fact that Rachel is "longing to be up and doing." (Clever, 95-6) As an invalid, of course, Ermine

cannot be physically active and so again the means each woman employs to do good is different. Ermine writes articles for a magazine, an activity which contrasts sharply with Rachel's mission.

Perhaps the most important similarity shared by the women is their interest in intellectual pursuits. Ermine, too, has a knowledge of languages and other subjects and also reads widely. It is her own claim to intellectual achievements coupled with the way in which she manages her affairs that also gives Ermine Williams' claim to the title of the clever woman of the family. We note that the title of the novel allows for only one clever woman and so the ladies cannot share the mantle. Thus it is necessary to evaluate the course of action taken by each one in order to see which in fact is the real clever woman, and in order to understand what lesson it is that Charlotte Yonge wishes to illustrate.

As we have seen, Rachel is looking for a "mission." She makes two false starts. The first of these concerns the education of her cousin's children. Lady Fanny Temple, recently widowed, returns to England and settles in Avonmouth with her seven young children. Rachel eagerly looks forward to the arrival of the family. She muses that the education of Fanny's children may be "only a domestic mission" (Clever, 5) but nevertheless what she seeks. The experiment in teaching is not successful, however, because Fanny's children do not like Rachel and they rebel against the insensitive imposition of her authority. The role of teacher is successfully taken over by Ermine's sister, Aileen.

The second false start arises because in her wake Lady Temple brings to Avonmouth a number of military men, friends

of her late husband, the General. One of these, Captain Alick Keith, has a sister, Bessie, who has great energy and enthusiasm. Rachel hopes that her friendship with Bessie Keith may "afford her food for eagerness and energy," (Clever, 115) and that to influence Bessie might become her mission. It soon becomes apparent, however, that Bessie is far more independent and self-sufficient than Rachel and thus cannot be influenced by her. Rachel realizes quickly that her second attempt to find a mission has failed.

Rachel's third attempt at finding a mission seems initially to succeed. In her early musing Rachel expressed great concern for the "children cramped in soul, destroyed in body, that fine ladies may wear lace trimmings!" (Clever, 5) The lace industry, carried on in the homes of the Avonmouth poor, employs young girls to work in terribly cramped conditions and for long hours over tedious and exacting work. Rachel is justly indignant both that conditions must be so bad and that the girls earn such poor wages. She decides to establish an asylum for girls where they may learn less arduous and more profitable employment. She dreams that she will "reserve herself and her means as the nucleus of the great future establishment for maintaining female rights of labour." (Clever, 149)

The basic motive behind Rachel's mission is good. However the fact that she sees herself as the force behind the great establishment is somewhat less than ideal. More important is the fact that Rachel enters into her scheme without the advice or guidance of any "superior" person. Indeed she makes no attempt to work under the direction of her clergyman. Thus it is no surprise that Rachel begins her mission by

committing a grave error. She entrusts the running of the establishment to a "clerical gentleman who had opinions." (Clever, 126) Opinions, a euphemism for doubts, are the last thing a trustworthy cleric may hold. Yet Rachel, even though she knows of this drawback, hires Mr. Mauleverer to watch over two young Avonmouth girls and a matron who herself has a small daughter to be taught.

Although evidence soon begins to accumulate against him, Rachel chooses to ignore it and refuses to believe that Mr. Mauleverer is untrustworthy. She entrusts to him money for running the establishment but he does not pay the asylum's bills and various other anomalies go unexplained. Even when she realizes he had deceived her concerning the skills in wood-carving which the three young girls were to learn, Rachel does not immediately act. While she hesitates Lady Temple invades the establishment and brings back to Rachel the two young Avonmouth girls, badly beaten by the matron, suffering from malnutrition and gravely ill. One of them dies of diphtheria and Rachel is forced to admit that she is to blame, at least in part, for the death.

Thus we are led to believe that a scheme, independently conceived and carried out by a woman outside her natural sphere of domestic life, is doomed to failure. Part of the lesson of the novel, therefore, is that for a woman to act outside her allotted domestic domain is to invite certain disaster. This is not the whole story, however, nor is the failure of her mission the end of Rachel's development. In order to comprehend Rachel's folly it is necessary to contrast it with the sensible behaviour of Ermine Williams during the same period.

One of Ermine's daily activities is the instruction of her niece, Rose. Here we observe a distinct difference in the performance of an activity of the same nature by the two women. Rachel tried to force her services on the Temple family and she failed miserably as a teacher whereas Ermine took up the task which came unbidden to her and made a great success of her teaching. Not only does Rose do well in her studies but aunt and niece enjoy this shared activity. It is a small but telling contrast between the two women.

A more important contrast between Ermine and Rachel is the success or lack of success each has as an influence in and on society. We have seen that Rachel was unable to bring Bessie Keith under her influence. Bessie is unusual because of her high degree of independence but even so Rachel's failure with her is indicative of her general lack of influence. She succeeds in influencing no one, not her mother, sister, Lady Temple nor any of the other minor characters who come her way. But Rachel would like to be an influence and the person she wishes to emulate, although she does not realize it, is Ermine Williams.

Ermine writes articles for a magazine entitled The Traveller. She uses the pseudonym "The Invalid" and her identity is a closely guarded secret. In her articles she talks sensibly on many subjects such as "systematic reading" (Clever, 51) and thereby influences a great number of people. Proof of her influence is Rachel's assertion, as she takes up her pen to write, that "I should like to have as much influence over people's minds as that Invalid, for instance. . . ." (Clever, 52)

Ermine's articles are composed after due deliberation.

Writing is one way she has of being useful and we note that her modest use of a pseudonym is in contrast with Rachel's vision of being the head of a great establishment. The difference in attitude of the two women is also notable when Rachel visits Ermine in order to read aloud her article on "Curatolatry" or "That sickly mixture of flirtation and hero worship, with a religious daub as a salve to the conscience." (Clever, 50) Ermine skeptically asks "Is good to come of it?" (Clever, 51) but the question goes unanswered. Rachel is not used to answering criticism or even justifying her pursuits. Unlike Ermine who says she was "kept down" by her father and brother, Rachel forges ahead unchecked. Furthermore Ermine's journalism in no way keeps her from her domestic occupations nor from being her sister's trusted friend and companion. Her fees for her articles are also an important source of income for the impoverished sisters. Rachel, on the other hand, seems to want to impose her strong opinions on other people without due consideration of the effects of her words or actions.

During the time that Rachel is involved in her mission, Ermine is a good and successful influence, and her career as an author can be cited as a contrast to Rachel's failure as a liberator of girls in the lace industry. Rachel also fails as an authoress. Unknown to Rachel, Ermine is acting editor of the magazine at the time Rachel submits her article for publication. Ermine's earlier criticism still holds true, no good is to come of the article, and so she reluctantly refuses the essay. We are left in no doubt as to the correctness and honesty of her action. One of the women, therefore, is markedly successful in her literary, perhaps we might even say intellectual, pursuits, whereas the other is not.

The difference in intellectual achievement is an important point because after the collapse of her scheme and the death of the young girl, Mr. Mauleverer is put on trial, and during the course of the trial Rachel is driven to a more accurate assessment of her intellectual powers. It is at this stage of Rachel's development that Charlotte Yonge most strongly attacks her independent behaviour. Rachel's performance on the witness stand makes her reputation for cleverness seem completely ill-founded. Her foolish trust of Mr. Mauleverer and her inept handling of matters concerning the asylum show Rachel just how easily she was tricked. "Here was she, the Clever Woman of the family, shown in open court to have been so egregious a dupe that the deceiver could not even be punished, but must go scot free, leaving all her wrongs unredressed!" (Clever, 253) It is all very well to say that her misplaced confidence in her ability and her present difficulties stem from the fact that "She has always been told she is the clever woman of the family . . ." (Clever, 172) but the fact remains and she realises it herself, that she is not in truth very clever at all.

Not surprisingly Rachel sinks into a depression and in her depressed state she confesses that her faith "is all confusion," (Clever, 275) Faith, as Miss Yonge indicates time and time again throughout her work, is the only basis for moral behaviour. The reader, however, is not aware before this time that there was anything amiss with Rachel's faith and the declaration comes somewhat as a surprise. It is true that both Rachel's dislike of the curate and her trust in Mr. Mauleverer are suspicious acts on the part of a heroine, yet Miss Yonge nowhere lays any foundation for such spiritual weakness.

The reason for her confusion, Rachel says, is that although she wishes to believe, she "cannot rest or trust for thinking of the questions that have been raised!" (Clever, 275) Here is another surprise for the reader for up to this point there has been no hint that Rachel's intellectual activity went as far as religious questioning. However the discussion or questioning of religious beliefs was an area of intellectual activity Miss Yonge wished particularly to condemn,[6] and in this novel she wishes to show that it is a particularly dangerous activity for a woman. Only at this point in Rachel's development does Charlotte Yonge couple her failure in an independent action, with weak foundations in the Anglican faith. Unlike the situations in some of her other novels, this one lacks adequate preparation. Although the novel reads fairly smoothly through this episode, upon reflection the sudden introduction of doubts is a weakness in the story's development.

However Rachel has suffered greatly and much as Miss Yonge censures her for independent behaviour, independent thinking and lack of faith, nevertheless she redeems Rachel to a happy life. Rachel abandons her feminine independence and her battle with religious questions and marries Alick Keith. Alick has defended Rachel all along because he was aware of her fine qualities. He notes that "obnoxious sageness in youth is the token that there is stuff behind." (Clever, 115) Rachel, on her part, accepts the offer in a

[6] Another example occurs in Magnum Bonum. Bobus Carey suffers greatly as a result of an intellectual questioning of his faith; and his younger sister, Barbara, is warned by the dying Lord Fordham "Never knowingly to read those sneering books. . . ." Magnum Bonum; or, Mother Carey's Brood (London: Macmillan and Co., 1882), p. 579.

most humble and grateful fashion. She explains to Ermine that

> "I used to think it so poor and weak to be in love, or to want any one to take care of one. I thought marriage such ordinary drudgery, and ordinary opinions so contemptible, and had such schemes for myself. And this--and this is such a break down, my blunders and their consequences have been so unspeakably dreadful, and now instead of suffering, dying--as I felt I ought--it has only made me just like other women, for I know I could not live without him, and then all the rest of it must come for his sake." (Clever, 283)

By admitting her blunders and by happily taking on a dependent, submissive role, Rachel has the opportunity to become a happy woman. This she achieves in the course of time. She comes to appreciate the superiority of her husband's intellect. He and his uncle, a blind old rector, answer her religious doubts, doubts which Miss Yonge never clearly specifies. Thus, "unwilling as she would have been to own it, [Rachel finally admits that] a woman's tone of thought is commonly moulded by the masculine intellect, which, under one form or another, becomes the master of her soul." (Clever, 337) The transformation is complete. Through marriage and intellectual submission Rachel becomes truly happy and thoroughly domestic. She happily confesses at the end of the novel that "I am not fit to be anything but an ordinary married woman, with an Alick to take care of me. . . ." (Clever, 345)

Rachel, in accepting the epithet "ordinary" abandons her claim to the title of "the clever woman of the family." Such, indeed, is the situation at the end of the novel. But it is not simply because she marries that Rachel gives up the

title. For both heroines marry. Ermine Williams marries her long affianced Colin Keith, who is, by coincidence, a cousin of Alick. But Ermine does not give up her claim to the title by marrying. Her marriage merely extends her domestic sphere. She continues with her writing and other intellectual pursuits. Ermine successfully combines domesticity with intellectuality and Rachel, for one, recognizes her success when she says "I am glad some people can be what I meant to be." (Clever, 345)

At the end of the novel the title of "clever woman" is recognized as really belonging to Ermine and it is fitting that it is Alick Keith who evaluates Ermine's achievements for his wife's benefit. He says she is an example of

> "how intellect and brilliant power can be no snares, but only blessings helping the spirits in infirmity and trouble, serving as a real engine for independence and usefulness, winning love and influence for good, genuine talents in the highest sense of the word, then commend me to such a Clever Woman of the family as Ermine Keith." (Clever, 367)

Alick's evaluation points to the essential differences in the two women. Ermine's intellect is not a snare for her. It enables her to be useful and to carry out her domestic duties, and she uses her intellectual abilities in order to do good. This, we may conclude, is Charlotte Yonge's definition of a truly clever woman. Rachel too has some intellectual ability, "your plodding intellectuality" (Clever, 367) Alick calls it, but for her it is a snare. Her scheme tried to be useful but it snared Rachel into doing wrong; she inadvertantly used her influence for bad because she sought work outside her

natural sphere. Rachel is not, therefore, truly clever.

Although she shows quite clearly that in one case cleverness is a snare whereas in a second case it is not, Miss Yonge does not as clearly illustrate the moral lesson in this novel as she does, for example, in Heartsease. She abuses not cleverness itself but cleverness which is not domestically based and specifically cleverness which questions religious precepts. Yet Rachel's mission does not end in disaster because of her own direct actions or because the foundations of her faith are weak. It ends in disaster because by chance the person to whom Rachel entrusts the management of the asylum is a villain. If Mr. Mauleverer had not been a villain even with his "opinions" the mission could have been a success. Yet it is precisely because Rachel's intentions were praiseworthy and the disaster not her fault that Miss Yonge is able to redeem her to a happily married life.[7] The fact that the disaster is not Rachel's fault is therefore both a weakness and a strength in the story. It is a weakness because the lesson to be learned concerning Rachel's cleverness is less definitive and it is a strength because Rachel is so honest and worthy a heroine that to have punished her more severely would have been unrealistic.

In retrospect, then, the lesson of The Clever Woman combines criticism of independent action and thought with praise for submission to a truly domestic life. The lesson, although given a contemporary treatment, in essence

[7] In contrast Caroline Lyddell in The Two Guardians had to die because she knew Mr. Faulkner was an infidel before she became engaged to him.

extols the same virtue of submission to home circumstances which we saw illustrated in Heartsease. It is significant, however, that the lesson is not so easily detected. This reflects not so much the more subtle treatment of the story as it does the more complex social situation which Miss Yonge uses to illustrate the basic womanly notions of duty and obedience in which she so firmly believed. We shall see that in the following decade, the seventies, the lesson of domestic submission became even more difficult to illustrate.

iv

## The Three Brides

The Three Brides was published in 1876, eleven years after The Clever Woman of the Family and twenty-two years after Heartsease. In Heartsease we noted that Miss Yonge applies her domestic lesson in women's duties with confidence but that in The Clever Woman it was somewhat difficult for her to evaluate the contemporary behaviour of women and therefore somewhat difficult for her to illustrate a lesson in moral behaviour. The difference between Victorian society as described in Heartsease and The Three Brides is even greater than the difference between Heartsease and The Clever Woman. In The Three Brides it is clear that Charlotte Yonge disapproves of some contemporary notions, and that her commitment to a set of outdated principles renders her incapable of expressing the essence of contemporary society with the sympathy that characterizes her earlier works, such as Heartsease and

The Daisy Chain. The Three Brides is the last, perhaps excepting Magnum Bonum (1879), of Miss Yonge's major fictional works. An account of her decline as a novelist will be the subject of the seventh chapter but the seeds of her decline are already present in The Three Brides.

The novel is successful, in so far as it is successful, because Miss Yonge still retains her powerful story-telling and character creating abilities. The reader is carried along by the pace of the tale, by the many incidents and by a genuine interest in the characters. It is only in retrospect that it becomes clear that the novel has failed in its most important aspect, most important that is to Miss Yonge, the teaching of a lesson. The lesson that she attempts to teach is partly obscured by the failure of some important characters to carry conviction in the roles assigned to them and by the introduction of a lady villain. Most important, however, is the fact that the lesson itself is not clear-cut. The lesson, to be sure, is the inevitable and ubiquitous lesson of the value and need for the virtues of duty and obedience. However, the positive affirmation of the lesson is overshadowed by its negative aspect which is concerned with the evils and shortcomings of independent women, women that is to say who are neither dutiful nor obedient. Miss Yonge is forced by her avowal of her mid-Victorian ideals into the untenable position of asserting that if women do not remain within the confines of duty and obedience as delineated by either husband or parents, then, even if they are right in their assertions, they are wrong to carry them out.

Charlotte Yonge was so scrupulously honest both morally and artistically that it was impossible for her to be unaware of the untenability of her position. That this is so can be demonstrated by the fact that the independent women are given a good case to argue, are depicted in several cases as goodhearted and sensible and are in no instance depicted as wicked but only as misled.

One great difference between The Three Brides and The Clever Woman of the Family is that in the latter only one woman, Rachel Curtis, tries to embrace the modern attitude of independence, whereas in the former there is a whole band of independent and independently-minded women. This is, of course, an accurate reflection of the progress made by women during the period between 1865 and 1876. However, Charlotte Yonge did not consider that the new standards were progressive in any complimentary sense of the word. Even if she could not bring herself intellectually to be completely hostile to the new ideas, she certainly believed that the old standards were morally and religiously better, that they should be extolled and that the dangers of the new standards should be made quite clear.

We may speculate that the new standards represented a personal and psychological threat to Miss Yonge and in the light of this, it is not surprising that there is very little humour in the novel, for the subject is too serious to be treated lightly. Indeed the only humour that there is appears in the satirizing of some of the independent women. Furthermore two of the three brides

have no wit at all and the third is called upon to suppress her natural vivacity in order to undertake a properly submissive and dutiful wifely role. There is no equivalent to Violet Martindale or Ermine Williams in The Three Brides and the one character who might have been expected to be the shining exemplar of all that is good in the old standards, the mutual mother-in-law, Mrs. Charnock Poynsett, is a singularly dull and unattractive person. Nevertheless it was Charlotte Yonge's intention to show by means of the various responses and reactions of the three brides that the old standards of duty and obedience were inviolate despite the difficulties inherent in the domestic situation and despite the temptation of modern ideas concerning feminine independence.

To illustrate the point Miss Yonge had each of the three brides given the same charge by her new husband, to be a daughter to his invalided mother. How each of the three brides carries out this specific task, therefore, becomes a means by which we may measure their acceptance of the notions of duty and obedience.

Aside from this one task the women have little in common. Cecil, who has married the eldest brother, the heir to the estate and local M.P., is a self-centred woman who is used to receiving attention rather than giving it. Anne, the bride of the second son, the absent sailor, Miles, has grown up in South Africa and in an atmosphere so different from the middle-class life of her husband and his family that she is shocked by their standards and habits. Lady Rosamond, the bride of the third son and newly appointed rector of Compton-Poynsett,

has lived a gay social life in the various towns where her father's regiment was stationed. There is no immediate basis for compatibility between the three brides, therefore, as their upbringings have been so very different.

Only Anne, whose husband is absent, has no secondary duties to perform, yet, as we shall see, she is the one bride who takes them upon herself. Cecil and Rosamond both have husbands to whom they owe certain loyalties. Thus we shall have a second standard by which to judge these brides, first as daughters to Mrs. Charnock Poynsett and second as wives to their husbands. Because both Rosamond and Cecil are English women we shall look at them as examples of the new adult generation of the 1870's to see whether or not their ideas of duty and submission clash with their ideas of independent behaviour for women.

All three brides arrive simultaneously, coincidentally and implausibly one afternoon at Compton-Poynsett. All are previously unknown to each other and to their mother-in-law. This extraordinary state of affairs is not difficult to explain, however. Cecil married Raymond in Europe during a prolonged educational tour she was taking and which they converted into a bridal tour. She and her husband are second cousins and the match is considered by her father to be an extension of his daughter's sphere of influence. Anne arrives alone from South Africa where Miles met and wooed her. Her arrival was delayed several days because of the need to recover from the long voyage. Lady Rosamond and Julius had their marriage

hastened by the departure of her father to a new post. Each marriage was in some measure expedient and partially determined by events. Thus their simultaneous arrival is governed largely by chance.

Soon after the arrival of the three brides there is a fire in the town of Compton-Poynsett. The activities which arise from the calamity occupy the attention of Cecil, wife of the local M.P., and Rosamond, wife of the vicar. Cecil becomes particularly involved in the organization of a bazaar, the purpose of which is to raise funds for the relief of the poor and the reconstruction of the burnt-out church. Noble as the motives may be, the activities are unsupervised by the men folk of the community and they conclude in the almost inevitable onset of disaster, in the form of an epidemic, caused at least in part by womanly meddling with the drains. The epidemic is deadly not least to the Charnock Poynsetts. Only Raymond dies, but this is a severe blow to the family and brings Cecil to despair and, of course, widowhood. Her place as wife of the heir, who now becomes Miles, is taken by Anne and it is with Anne, so different from Cecil, that we begin our discussion of the three brides.

Anne had been sent home by Miles from South Africa specifically "to fulfil the mission of daughterhood to his mother."[8] Anne genuinely attempts to attend to

[8] C. M. Yonge, The Three Brides (London: Macmillan and Co., 1859), p. 5. Hereafter all references to this work in this chapter will be followed by Brides and a page number in parenthesis.

Mrs. Charnock Poynsett but the task is made difficult for her because of what she considers to be the wordly tone of the household. Her attitude differs greatly from that of the other two daughters-in-law and from the first evening together Anne's prejudices set her apart from the others. The strictness of her upbringing and the tenets of her religious beliefs are clearly illustrated in a conversation between Anne and Cecil during the evening.

> Raymond came in from the other room to make up a whist-table for his mother. Rosamond gladly responded; but there was a slight accent of contempt in Cecil's voice, as she replied, "I never played a game at cards in my life."
>
> "They are a great resource to my mother," said Raymond. "Anne, you are too tired to play?--No, Julius, the pack is not there; look in the drawer of the chiffonier."
>
> Julius handed the list he had been jotting down to Cecil, and followed his brother, with his hands full of cards, inconscious of the expression of dismay, almost horror, with which Anne was gazing after him.
>
> "Oh! let us be resolute!" she cried, as soon as the door was shut. "Do not let us touch the evil thing!"
>
> "Cards?" said Cecil. "If Mrs. Poynsett cannot be amused without them, I suppose we shall have to learn. I always heard she was such an intellectual woman."
>
> "But we ought to resist sin, however painful it may be," said Anne, gathering strength; "nay, even if a minister sets the example of defection."
>
> "You think it wicked," said Cecil. "Oh no, it is stupid and silly, and an absurd waste of time, but no more."
>
> "Yes it is," said Anne. "Cards are the bane of thousands."
>
> "Oh yes, gambling and all that; but to play in the evening to amuse an invalid can have no harm in it."
>
> "An invalid and aged woman ought to have her mind set upon better things," said Anne. "I shall not withdraw my testimony, and I hope you will not."
>
> "I don't know," said Cecil. "You see I am expected to attend to Mrs. Poynsett;

and I have seen whist at Dunstone [her father's home] when any dull old person came there. What a troublesome crocked hand Julius writes--just like Greek! What's all this? So many services--four on Sundays, two every day, three on Wednesdays and Fridays! We never had anything like this at Dunstone."

"It is very superstitious," said Anne.

"Very superfluous, I should say," amended Cecil. "I am sure my father would consent to nothing of the kind. I shall speak to Raymond about it."

"Yes," said Anne; "It does seem terrible that a minister should try to make up for worldly amusements by a quantity of vain ceremonies."

"I wish you would not call him a minister, it sounds like a dissenter."

"I think minister their best name, except pastors."

"Both are horrid alike," said Cecil "I shall teach all the people to call Julius the Rector. That's better than Mr. Charnock--what Raymond ought to be."

Anne was struck dumb at this fearful display of worldliness; and Cecil betook herself to the piano. . . . (Brides, 49-50)

On several other occasions as the novel progresses, Anne criticises the activities of her husband's family. "It was plain that every one of the whole family was giving continual shocks to Mr. Pilgrim's disciple, even when they felt most innocent. . . ." (Brides, 94) So great has the influence of the South African preacher been that Anne seriously asks a family friend if Rosamond and Julius are truly Christians.

Anne's retirement from social life is only suitable in the absence of her husband. Similiarly she retires from the main drama of the story only to emerge from time to time in order to demonstrate some progress in her reconciliation to her husband's family and, by implication, to Anglicanism. One such occasion takes place in Julius'

and Rosamond's carriage as, with Anne, they drive to a neighboring town. Anne has learned to like Rosamond and Julius but she nevertheless questions their behaviour and in this case she questions the rights and wrongs of attending balls. Anne believes that balls are "worldly" and therefore evil, but Julius has a more reasoned attitude about worldliness which, he says, arises when people sacrifice a duty to pleasure. "To my mind, balls stand on the same ground; they are innocent as long as nothing right is given up for them." (Brides, 201) Anne can accept such an explanation but for her the social world remains threatening and she longs for the day when she and Miles will return to "live in the Bush, out of the way of it all." (Brides, 202)

As for the "mission of daughterhood" (Brides, 5), Anne continually strives to do her duty and gradually her success comes to light. Julius remarks to a minor character that "Anne is a very efficient companion" (Brides, 286) for his mother. Some time later Mrs. Charnock Poynsett reflects that although Rosamond was a "pleasant daughter-in-law" with her "winsome nonsense" for actual "substantial care, Anne was the strength and reliance." (Brides, 333)

Thus when the epidemic strikes the local village and several members of the Charnock Poynsett family fall ill, it is Anne whose sense of duty guides her in nursing and catering to the family's needs so that she becomes the main-stay of the whole family. Tributes to Anne's unfailing kindness and comfort come from many sides. As he lies dying Raymond remarks to his mother that Anne

is a "priceless treasure." (Brides, 411) A younger brother, Frank, exclaims to Miles, who returns to England as the epidemic wanes, that "she is our blessing!" (Brides, 432) Julius too adds his praise when he says "Your wife is too valuable, Miles; she is everyone's property." (Brides, 434)

Miles' return and Raymond's death completely change the expectations of the second son and his wife. The place of eldest son falls heavily on Miles who had promised his wife a home in the Bush. But the outcome of the change in status can be viewed as a reward to the dutiful daughter who has achieved such a valuable place in the family. Raymond and Julius are both convinced that "Anne is the daughter for my mother." (Brides, 436) Yet the changed situation, Miles reflects, would be a "punishment" (Brides, 458) to Anne who dreads society.

Although Anne has little choice, her conversation with Miles, as to whether or not he should assume the duties of eldest son, reflects Anne's highly developed sense of duty, her softened attitude towards the social and religious ideas of the family, her firm commitment to the duties her husband's position requires of her, and in short, her dutiful devotion to his life and requirements.

> "I read over my old diary and saw how tiresome and presumptuous I was, and how wonderfully she /the mother/ bore with me, and so did Julius and Rosamond, while all the time I fancied them--no Christians."
>
> "Ah! you child! You know I would never have done it if I had known you were to be swamped among brides. At any rate, this poor old place doesn't look

so woefully dismal and hateful to you now."

"It could not, where you are, and where I have so many to know and love."

"You can bear the downfall of our Bush schemes?"

"Your duty is here now."

"Are you grieved, little one?"

"I don't know. I should like to have seen mamma; but she does not need me now as your mother does."

"Then are you willing to be her daughter?"

"I have tried hard, and she is very kind; but I am far too dull and ignorant for her. I can only wait upon her; but when she has you and Julius to talk to, my stupidity will not matter."

"Would you be content to devote yourself to her, instead of making a home of our own?"

"She can't be left alone in that great house."

"The question is, can you be happy in it? or do you wish for a house to ourselves?"

"You don't, Miles, it is your own home."

"That's not the question."

"Miles, why do you look at me so?"

"I was told to ascertain your wishes."

"I don't wish anything--now I have you--but to be a comfort to your mother. That is my first earthly wish just now."

"If that be earthly, it has a touch of the heavenly," muttered Miles to himself." (Brides, 461-2)

Her conversation here has none of the spirited conviction of her earlier conversation with Cecil about cardplaying. Although Anne is a good character and believably so, we do not find in her a sympathetic and congenial advocate of the mid-Victorian ideas. Even though she succeeds in becoming a daughter to Mrs. Charnock Poynsett and is rewarded with the prospect of being the future mistress of Compton-Poynsett and wife of the local M.P., her development does not teach the lesson of duty and obedience because we do not witness in detail her confrontation with a series of specific difficulties.

Instead we witness, occasionally, her gradual weaning from a set of unsympathetic and as she says "uncharitable" attitudes.

Rosamond, who has an altogether different personality from Anne, has to be weaned from attitudes unsuitable for the wife of a rector. Although she is a more prominent character than Anne, Lady Rosamond does not undergo as great a change. She too was brought home by her husband to be a daughter to Mrs. Charnock Poynsett but from the first Rosamond has additional duties arising from the fact that her husband is at home with her.

The difficulties which Rosamond encounters, furthermore, are not as intractable as those which beset the straightlaced Anne. From the beginning the mother-in-law recognizes both the blessing and the difficulty of her third son's marriage.

> Lady Rosamond did not occupy her much. There was evidently plenty of good strong love between her and her husband; and though her training might not have been the best for a clergyman's wife, there was substance enough in both to shake down together in time. (Brides, 24)

It is Rosamond's training past and present upon which Charlotte Yonge concentrates in the development of her character. Julius is aware that some changes in behaviour are desirable. As regards Rosamond's love of dancing, for example, he explains to his mother that "it is better to acquiesce till it subsides of itself. You see it is hard, after such a life of change and variety, to settle down into a country parsonage." (Brides, 77) However, there are other matters which are more serious in nature than dancing.

One of these concerns the matter of suitable clothing for a vicar's wife and in this area Rosamond's ignorance of standards is a serious offence. For the first introduction of the Julius Charnocks into society, Rosamond wears her bridal gown. She and Julius leave for the party from Mrs. Charnock Poynsett's drawing room.

> For one moment she had slipped back her little mantle, then drawn it on, as, taking her husband's arm, she left the room; but that moment had set Anne's cheeks aflame, and left Mrs. Poynsett in a startled state of uncertainty, hoping her glance had been mistaken, wondering what could have been more amiss. . . . (Brides, 96)

The bare shoulders can not but cause a mild sensation and after the ball Julius approaches his mother for her opinion. She replies that "it is not a style of dress I could ever have worn, nor have let my daughters have worn, if I had had any." (Brides, 99) This censorship should have shown Rosamond her error but she is somewhat independent in spirit. She must learn to submit to her husband's wishes and so at first she falls back on the authority of her own mother who helped her choose the dress. However the second time she attends a ball in the Bridal gown the lady villain, Camilla Tyrrell, admires her gown and her audacity in wearing it. But because Rosamond disapproves of Camilla's standards she takes the compliment as an insult and is thereby cured of the unsuitable exposure.

Refraining from this obvious breach of decorum does not solve every problem experienced by Julius and Rosamond for "That never-ending question, whether what became the colonel's daughter became the clergyman's wife, would crop up under endless forms." (Brides, 140) Generally Rosamond

kept to her old standards and so "scandalize/d/ Cecil by an excess of talkin~ and of waltzing, such as even Raymond regretted. . . ." (Brides, 140) The lesson which Rosamond needs to learn is submission to her husband's wishes. The question of decorum and the incident of the Bridal gown fail to teach this to Rosamond partly because she learns from an unsuitable person and in anger, but mainly because she does not voluntarily embrace her husband's standard as a result of the episode. Yet Julius remains confident of "Rosamond's wells of unselfish affection, confident that all the cravings for variety and excitement, which early habit had rendered second nature, would be absorbed by the deeper and keener feelings within. . . ." (Brides, 211)

The major incident, of which the Bridal gown was merely the foreshadowing, has to do with a form of amusement which, unlike balls, Julius seriously believes to have harmful consequences, horseracing. Rosamond again refuses to forgo "the pleasures she had shared with her parents" (Brides, 325) and she refuses to give up attendance at the annual local meeting. However the harm which Julius believes right-minded people do by supporting the sport directly touches Rosamond. Her nursery maid is unable to resist the excitement and takes her young charge with her to the racecourse. When Rosamond returns from the afternoon's pleasure she is in despair when she discovers first that the baby is missing and also that the maid was seen at the course. Little Julia is recovered

safely but the incident forcefully brings home to Rosamond the evil influence of horseracing and, more importantly, the superiority of her husband's judgment. She promises her husband, "I'll never, never go anywhere again!" (Brides, 359)

For the first time it is Rosamond's own conviction that what she did was wrong and not the judgment of another that persuades her to accept without reservation her husband's judgment. Rosamond has learned to be submissive. Her personality does not change but she accepts the duty of submission to her husband's authority over her love of gaiety.

> Rosamond would never cease to love society. Even had she been a grandmother she would have fired at the notion of a party, enjoy, and render it enjoyable; and the mere announcement of a new face would be as stimulating to her as it was the reverse to Anne. But she had grown into such union with her husband, and had so forgotten the Rathforlane defense, as to learn that it was pleasant to do as he liked than to try to make him like what she did, and a look of disapproval from him would open her eyes to the flaws in any scheme, however enchanting at first. (Brides, 551)

In general Miss Yonge's treatment of Rosamond is both sympathetic and kind. Rosamond displays no real desire to be independent; it is in the matter of suitable conduct, or manners, that she learns her lesson of submission. In Rosamond therefore we have more a lesson of manners than one of virtuous behaviour. In Cecil, however, the lesson of submission is of a far more serious nature. Cecil does try to behave with feminine independence and her treatment by Miss Yonge is not as sympathetic or kind as is Rosamond's. Indeed, although Rosamond has little

opportunity to be a daughter to Mrs. Charnock Poynsett she succeeds well enough with this task. It is Cecil, wife of the eldest and favourite son, who completely fails both in her wifely duties and as a daughter-in-law.

Cecil takes up the duties of married life with a view to her own aggrandisement. She explains to Rosamond that "there is much more of a field for me here than at Dunstone since Papa's /re/marriage." (Brides, 19) Her marriage, in fact, is a marriage of convenience. Raymond wanted a daughter for his invalided mother and since his first love had long before married another, Raymond settled on his second cousin. On Cecil's part Raymond was the obvious choice for a husband.

> He was the very man to whom two or three centuries ago Mr. Charnock /Cecil's father/ would have betrothed the heiress in her infancy; and Cecil had never liked anyone so well, feeling that her destiny came to a proper culmination in bestowing her hand on the most eligible Charnock, an M.P., and just a step above her father in rank and influence. (Brides, 27)

Thus from the beginning of her married life Cecil's attitude is a selfish one. She behaves as if she is mistress of Compton-Poynsett in place of her mother-in-law and she does not devote herself to the duties of a daughter-in-law. Although Raymond requests of Cecil that "She should be your first object," (Brides, 28) Cecil is the only bride who asks, "What will she want me to do for her?" (Brides, 28) whereas both Rosamond and Anne sought ways of being useful.

Cecil does little for Mrs. Charnock Poynsett because from the beginning the ladies do not get along. This is, of course, a source of sorrow to Raymond who puts the

blame directly upon his young wife. Attention due to his mother becomes a subject of disagreement between husband and wife as does the friendship which Cecil strikes up with a neighbour, the lady villain of the novel, Lady Camilla Tyrrell.

Raymond early warns Cecil against Lady Tyrrell, a widow, and her father and sister, the Vivians. He requests that she does not "make the intercourse unnecessarily close," but the reason he gives for the prohibition is not likely to gain Cecil's obedience. Raymond says that "The Vivians have not behaved well to my mother, and it is not desirable to begin a renewal /of acquaintance/." (Brides, 117) What Raymond does not, but perhaps should, add is that, as Julius explains to Rosamond, Camilla Vivian, now Lady Tyrrell, was "poor Raymond's grande passion." (Brides, 32) More than ten years earlier they became engaged. The engagement was viewed with displeasure by Mrs. Charnock Poynsett and by several other members of the family who had no high opinion of Camilla's scheming ways. However, it was Camilla who broke the engagement on a pretext when Lord Tyrrell showed an interest in her. She was widowed shortly before Raymond's marriage and returned to her ancestral home. The plot, but not the lesson, of the novel hinges on Camilla's behaviour toward Cecil. Camilla hides from Cecil the fact that she is Raymond's old flame and on one occasion she implies that the woman in question is abroad. Whether or not Camilla acts maliciously is not made clear, but it is certain that if Cecil had known the truth she would not have

associated herself with the lady. Thus, Cecil bears somewhat reduced responsibility for the results of her disobedient act of close friendship with Camilla.

Cecil, in any event, enjoys the attention to herself and her prestigious position which Camilla eagerly gives her. Thus one act of disobedience to her husband's wishes exposes Cecil to great danger. She falls under the spell of Camilla who has modern ideas of woman's independence, and disaster results.

The disaster results in fact from the unfortunate coincidence between woman's rights and infected drains. Camilla and her friend, Mrs. Duncombe, seize upon the issue of drains because "It is pre-eminently a woman's question, and this is a great opportunity." (Brides, 120) Why it should be a woman's question pre-eminently is not explained. However the opportunity is undoubtedly great. It arises after the fire in the village which destroys many houses, a parish church and a local factory. The drains have been infected for some time but they are not the major concern of the townspeople. Their immediate concern is to provide work for those who worked in the burnt out factory. At a town council meeting the energetic Mrs. Duncombe provides the only suitable solution to the problem which is to provide work making clothes, and her suggestion is adopted. It is on this occasion that Cecil first begins to admire independence in women. On this occasion Cecil "had seen a woman attain to a pinnacle that almost dazzled her, by sheer resource and good sense." (Brides, 91) When the meeting is recounted to Mrs. Charnock

Poynsett, however, the other members of the family view Mrs. Duncombe's behaviour in a different light.

> Raymond recounted the adventure at his mother's kettle-drum, telling of his own astonishment at the little lady's assurance.
>
> "I do not see why she should be censured," said Cecil. "You were all at a loss without her."
>
> "She should have got her husband to speak for her," said Mrs. Poynsett.
>
> "He was not there."
>
> "Then she should have instructed some other gentleman," said Mrs. Poynsett. "A woman spoils all the effect of her doings by putting herself out of her proper place."
>
> "Perfectly disgusting!" said Julius.
>
> Cecil had decidedly not been disgusted, except by the present strong language; and not being ready at repartee, she was pleased when Rosamond exclaimed, "Ah! that's just what men like, to get instructed in private by us poor women, and then gain all the credit for originality."
>
> "It is the right way," said the mother. "The woman has much power of working usefully and gaining information, but the one thing that is not required of her is to come forward in public."
>
> "Very convenient for the man!" laughed Rosamond.
>
> "And scarcely fair," said Cecil.
>
> "Quite fair," said Rosamond, turning round, so that Cecil only now perceived that she had been speaking in jest. "Any woman who is worth a sixpence had rather help her husband to shine than shine herself."
>
> "Besides," said Mrs. Poynsett, "the delicate edges of true womanhood ought not to be frayed off by exposure in public." (Brides, 91-2)

The episode serves to further separate Cecil from her new relations for, as Miss Yonge says, Cecil is definitely impressed by Mrs. Duncombe.

The scheme for employment works and therefore receives little attention from Miss Yonge. Instead she

concentrates on the scheme for the drain as an example of misguided feminism and on the growing friendship between the independently minded ladies especially Camilla and Cecil.

> The opposition made in the town to Mrs. Duncombe's sanitary plans, and the contempt with which they had been treated as ladies' fancies, had given a positive right and wrong on either side which is essential to championship. And in truth Cecil was so much more under the influence of Camilla Tyrrell and Bessie Duncombe than under that of any other person, that she was ready to espouse any cause that they did. (Brides, 192)

Thus Miss Yonge has mixed together Cecil's disobedience to her husband, which is partly a result of undutiful behaviour to his mother, the influence of Camilla on the unsuspecting Cecil, the subject of independent behaviour for women and the matter of healthy drains, a matter which Miss Yonge honestly admits, has some merit to it. The rights and wrongs of the situation and of the behaviour of the various characters is not easily disentangled as is most clearly demonstrated by Rosamond's one statement on the subject. She says, "I think houses and streets ought to be made clean and healthy; but as for woman's rule, I fancy we get more of it now than we should the other way." (Brides, 218) Her words give no practical advice nor offer any kind of solution to a recognized problem. Perhaps Miss Yonge had no answer to what seems to be an acute dilemma. Certainly the outcome of the story offers no clear moral lesson on any of the subjects, feminism, drains or Cecil's lack of duty and obedience.

The culmination of all these themes occurs at a long planned for bazaar. The bazaar takes place over a year after the fire. Cecil has continued her friendship with Camilla and has also continued her interest in feminine independence. She and Camilla plan the bazaar and one of its features is a booth to serve raspberry vinegar and other mild compounds made with water from a well improved under Mrs. Duncombe's supervision.

During the bazaar, which does not prosper as well as expected, someone suggests a beauty contest in which gentlemen pay for their votes. When the plan comes to Raymond's attention, he firmly stops the proceeding.

> "I am requested by the ladies present to state that such competition was never contemplated by their committee and would be repugnant to all their sentiments. They beg that the election may be at once dropped and the money returned."
>
> Mr. Charnock Poynsett had a weight that no one resisted. There was a moment's silence, a little murmur, apologetic and remonstrant, but the deed was done.
>
> Only a clear voice, with the thrillings of disappointed vanity and exultation scarcely disguised by a laugh, was heard saying, louder than the owner knew, "Oh, of course Mr. Charnock Poynsett spoiled sport. It would have been awkward between his wife and his old flame."
>
> "For shame, Gussie," hushed Mrs. Duncombe, "They'll hear."
>
> "I don't care! Let them! Stuck-up people!"
>
> Whoever heard, Cecil Charnock Poynsett did, and felt as if the ground were giving way with her. (Brides, 340)

In one stroke Cecil learns of the apparent treachery of her friend and of the reason for her husband's dislike of the friendship. She is distraught at the news and confesses her errors not to Raymond but to Rosamond who shares

her carriage on the homeward journey. Perhaps because her error not least in regard to Mrs. Charnock Poynsett has been very great, Miss Yonge denies Cecil the opportunity to confess her mistakes to Raymond. Both Cecil and Raymond are victims of the epidemic started by Mrs. Duncombe's well and spread by the bazaar. Cecil recovers but Raymond dies. This, of course, is further punishment for the proud wife who loses the reflected glory of her husband's status and who, because of her advocation of feminism, must take some of the blame for Mrs. Duncombe's projects and therefore some of the blame for her husband's death. Evidently the fever and the guilt of her disobedient and undutiful behaviour are punishment enough for the misguided woman, for Cecil is permitted to remarry, happily, in time.

It is interesting that Cecil's second marriage is to Rosamond's elder brother. Rosamond is the only person to sympathise at all with her situation. In fact the redemption to a happy marriage suggests that Charlotte Yonge might have realized that she placed Cecil in too severe and too impossible a situation for her to ever have made a success of it. Cecil comes to believe, and probably rightly, that she was "the victim of a <u>marriage de convenance</u>" (<u>Brides</u>, 278) and further evidence of this is the fact that Raymond prefers his mother's company to that of his wife. Even Mrs. Charnock Poynsett notices his lack of attention to his bride. Yet, even so Cecil presumably should have attempted to serve her mother-in-law and thereby avoid all the pitfalls she actually experienced. But service to Mrs. Charnock Poynsett may

not have been enough to make the marriage successful for Charlotte Yonge admits that for Raymond there was something "wanting in his manner" (Brides, 279) towards his wife and also that he was a man "of exhausted affections," (Brides, 278) thus suggesting that the situation could never have been happy.

Thus the lines between right and wrong behaviour are very much blurred in Cecil's case and her development therefore fails to clearly illustrate a lesson. Disobedient and undutiful as she is, there are good reasons for her wrong behaviour and we can sympathise with her mistakes as a wife and daughter-in-law. As for the question of women's rights, it is not clearly argued and the practical example in the question of the drains is inconclusive. Even Raymond, before he dies, admits that the women tackled a problem which the men should have taken up.

Nor does Mrs. Charnock Poynsett give an example of correct mid-Victorian behaviour. In addition she is a cold and unlikeable character. She says of the widowed bride, "She was the victim of an unsuccessful experiment of my dear boy's, and the unsuspecting instrument of poor Camilla's vengeance. That is all I see in her." (Brides, 545) The observation and evaluation are in keeping with Mrs. Poynsett's usual character. She is neither sympathetic nor charitable and in fact Mrs. Poynsett, although an invalid, has none of the virtues or appealing goodness of Miss Yonge's other invalids such as Margaret May or Charles Edmonstone. Charlotte Yonge affirms that

Mrs. Poynsett "had been the object of their /her sons/ adoration from nursery upwards," (Brides, 3) but the reader witnesses neither the adoration, except from Raymond, nor the reasons for it. The invalid's room, which "her cheerfulness" (Brides, 4) made pleasant for her sons, has no such charm for the reader.

Furthermore, Mrs. Poynsett, who is only in her fifties, does not set a standard of virtuous behaviour for her sons and their wives. She is not an advocate of any pattern of behaviour, not even Miss Yonge's own standards of duty and obedience. She recognizes that the difficulties which her children face in matters of home and religion are different from those of her own generation. Yet she has no guidelines from which to advise. In the unimportant matter of Rosamond's dancing Mrs. Poynsett is "conscious that she did not understand the merits of the case," and she is "glad there was no appeal to her" (Brides, 78) for her opinion in the matter. In the important matter of woman's rights she advocates neither more nor fewer rights, neither the old nor new standard. She does not understand the problem. "'For my part,' said Mrs. Poynsett, 'I can't see what women want. I have always had as many rights as I could exercise,'" (Brides, 160)

The depiction of society in 1876 as shown in the novel is that women do want something and that they do not have all the rights they can exercise. Although Anne becomes a dutiful daughter and Rosamond a dutiful wife, Cecil's activities are similar to those of a host of minor characters in the novel who pursue, or try to pursue,

depending on their circumstances, independent behaviour. Lady Susan Strangeways and her daughters, for example, apply their energies undirected by any male, to religious causes and to religious ritual. Gussie Moy hangs around her father's stable and eventually runs off to be married in a civil ceremony as evidence of her enlightenment. Mrs. Duncombe becomes a Catholic without reference to her husband's wishes. An American, Mrs. Tallboys, asserts the superior attitude of American men toward American women, who, she says, enjoy far greater freedom than English women.

The question remains unanswered in either the drain issue or by Cecil's development and, therefore, the question remains unanswered entirely in the novel. Charlotte Yonge's attitude is critical of the independent women but her censorship is relatively mild. Lady Strangeways is a widow with an impulse to do good and no other outlet; Gussie Moy was led astray by Mrs. Duncombe's ideas which she did not fully understand; Mrs. Duncombe herself learned the value of religion only during the epidemic she caused and the fact that she continues to correspond with Julius shows that her change of faith is not unforgiven; Mrs. Tallboys may be excused as the product of a different culture.

At the end of the novel Miss Yonge leaves us with a jest which shows what she considered to be the impossible situation of the independent woman. A minor character returns from a visit to South Africa and reports on the ostrich which

> he declared was a lesson in woman's rights, since Mrs. Ostrich was heedless and indifferent as to her eggs, but was regularly hunted back to the duties by her husband, who always had two wives, and regularly forced them to take turns in sitting; a system which Herbert observed would be needful if the rights of women were to work. (Brides, 549)

The conclusion seems to be that women with rights, or independence, can not but neglect their home duties and these, as we know, were paramount in importance for Charlotte Yonge. It is home duties that are stressed in Heartsease and home duties to which Rachel becomes reconciled in The Clever Woman. The fact that home duties do not provide the final solution in The Three Brides shows how great a change had occurred in the expectations of a young woman's life from 1854 to 1876.

# C H A P T E R  VI

# THE FAMILY CHRONICLES

## i

## Introduction

The family chronicles are a number of Miss Yonge's domestic novels which have all the characteristics of the domestic novels and certain additional characteristics, which, although they may be found individually elsewhere, can be found altogether only in the family chronicles.[1]

Miss Yonge herself defined a chronicle as "a domestic record of home events, large and small, during those years of early life when the character is chiefly formed. . . ."[2] "Those years of early life" are for Miss Yonge the years of adolescence. Thus the family chronicles focus on an age group, adolescence, more exclusively than on the feminine sex. Furthermore, Miss Yonge created in each chronicle one large family so that the "formation of character" could be depicted in a variety of ways. The variety usually derives from the differing attitudes of the various adolescents towards the requirements of domestic duty and obedience and, to a lesser extent, the requirements of

[1] Elizabeth Jenkins says, "most of her admirers feel that her unique achievement, surpassing even the Heir, consists in those extended family chronicles. . . ." "Charlotte Yonge as a Novelist," p. 7.

[2] The Daisy Chain; or, Aspirations. A Family Chronicle (London: Macmillan and Co., 1902), p. viii.

religious duty and obedience. The difficulties which the characters experience during their adolescent years make up the "small" events in the "record of home events." A "large" event which occurs in each chronicle is the removal, usually suddenly, of one or both of the parents of the chronicled family. Thus the adolescents have extra duties and responsibilities thrust upon them at a time when they are already burdened by the normal difficulties of their age-group.

Each of the family chronicles also has a theme, and each theme is a variation on the basic ideas concerning duty and obedience common to all Miss Yonge's work. However the themes are especially important because they are used to indicate which aspect of character formation is of particular concern in each of the chronicles. Furthermore the themes are the means by which we assess the performance of the adolescents in their new roles which nearly always call for special effort in the assumption of extra duties and responsibilities. Thus the themes serve to underline the importance of duty and obedience in the development of character.

There are, therefore, three main characteristics of a family chronicle; first a large family bereft of one or both parents, second an emphasis on adolescence and its problems especially as they relate to new domestic responsibilities, and third the use of a theme to illustrate certain aspects of character formation.

Miss Yonge wrote five domestic novels which may be termed family chronicles. The five chronicles, when the

length of each is compared with its respective date of publication, show an interesting progression. The first chronicle, Scenes and Characters; or, Eighteen Months at Beechcroft, was published in 1847.[3] It is Miss Yonge's second novel and the chronicle characteristics are present but not developed in detail in the approximately 100,000 words which make up the length of the novel.

The second chronicle, The Daisy Chain, was published in 1856. In this novel there is a detailed account of the lives of the May family, an account which spans about seven years. The chronicle characteristics are far more prominent than in Scenes and Characters and to do justice to her material Miss Yonge required roughly 300,000 words. The greater use of detail reflects in part Miss Yonge's increased skill as an authoress. By 1856 she had to her credit a best-seller, The Heir of Redclyffe (1853), and she had been the editor of a monthly magazine for five years.

The Pillars of the House is the third chronicle and was published in 1873, nearly twenty years after The Daisy Chain. It is the longest chronicle, a novel of some half million words, and the increase in word length has a corresponding increase in the importance given to the chronicle characteristics. In this chronicle both parents die and there are thirteen children in the orphaned family as compared to eleven May children in The Daisy Chain and ten Mohuns in Scenes and Characters. There are, therefore, more adolescents and they have more serious problems, both

[3] Georgina Battiscombe notes, "It is the first of the long series of the family chronicles. . . ." Charlotte Mary Yonge, p. 59.

financial and moral, than in the earlier works. Although published at the end of the mid-Victorian period, the Pillars chronicles nearly twenty years in the life of the Underwood family, and its setting is mid-Victorian.

The fourth chronicle shows for the first time a decline in quality and in the prominence of the chronicle characteristics. This novel, Magnum Bonum, was published in 1879, only six years after the Pillars, yet the novel reflects Miss Yonge's unsympathetic treatment of adolescent characters and therefore the beginning of her alienation from the changing Victorian society. Although Miss Yonge again depicts nearly twenty years in the life of the chronicled family, the family has only six children and the far less detailed account only requires approximately 200,000 words.

The decrease in both word length and chronicle characteristics evidenced in Magnum Bonum becomes even more noticeable in The Two Sides of the Shield published a few years later in 1885. The chronicle characteristics are only rudimentary and the novel itself is only 100,000 words or so in length. In this last chronicle Miss Yonge does not try to depict a contemporary family and setting as she does in Magnum Bonum nor does she follow the development of adolescent characters in any great detail. Instead she returns to the family depicted in Scenes and Characters, the Mohuns, and shows several of them in middle age together with their own adolescent children. Even so she was unable to depict the lives of these familiar characters in detail.

we shall consider the full impact which the gradually changing Victorian society had on Miss Yonge's domestic fiction in Chapters vII and vIII. In the present chapter we shall be concerned primarily with the first three chronicles: Scenes and Characters because it first presented chronicle characteristics and also because its family, the Mohuns, reappear in several later novels; The Daisy Chain because it was one of Miss Yonge's most popular books and also because it is among the very best of her novels;[4] The Pillars of the House because in it the chronicle characteristics are developed to their fullest extent and because it too displays Miss Yonge's skill as a domestic novelist.[5]

[4] Kathleen Tillotson calls The Daisy Chain "the best of her many family chronicles." "The Heir of Redclyffe," p. 55.

Miss Yonge wrote a sequel to the second chronicle. The Daisy Chain chronicles the lives of the near adult Mays including Ethel, and the sequel, entitled The Trial; or, More Links of the Daisy Chain, takes up the lives of Ethel and several of the youngest children as they grow into adolescence. However this novel has a murder mystery as its primary story line and it includes in its list of prominent characters a second family called Ward. So that although The Trial continues the story of the May family it cannot be defined as a family chronicle because of these extra elements and because it does not possess the characteristics of a chronicle. The remaining May family is small not large, there is no sudden removal of a parent, no adjustments are necessitated thereby and there is no theme to illustrate a variety of development among adolescent characters.

[5] In a letter dated 8th December, 1896, Miss Yonge comments that The Daisy Chain "has always had the best sale of all my books, yet when I read both it and the Pillars of the House over, for the sake of taking up the broken threads, as well as to see them with older eyes, I found myself preferring the latter, as brighter, and on the whole less pedantic than is the effect of Ethel in parts, and with more of hope throughout." Coleridge, Charlotte Mary Yonge, p. 398.

ii

Scenes and Characters; or, Eighteen Months at Beechcroft

The particular aspect of duty which Charlotte Yonge scrutinizes in Scenes and Characters (1847) is stated in her preface to the 1886 edition of the novel. She says, "the simple endeavour to fulfil each immediate claim of duty may lead to the highest acts of self-devotion. . . ."[6] Attention is, therefore, directed to the daily and seemingly unimportant details of domestic life. The lesson of the novel, which is but another view of the theme, is particularly evident in the contrasting developments of two sisters whose responses to "each immediate chain of duty" are quite different. The character development of one sister, Emily, shows the "effects of being guided by mere feeling, set in contrast" to the development of her younger sister, Lilias, whose action, eventually, results from a "strict adherence to duty."[7]

The immediate claims of duty for the Mohun children increase when Eleanor, the eldest daughter and mistress of the house, finally consents to marry. After her mother's death, some years past, Eleanor had "felt it was her duty to give up her own prospects of happiness and to remain at home." (Scenes, 2) However, the time has come at the beginning of the novel when Emily and Lilias, the sisters

[6] (London: Macmillan and Co. 1886), p. vi. All other references to Scenes and Characters in this chapter are from the John and Charles Mozley edition, London, 1853. The quotations will be follows by Scenes and a page number in parenthesis.

[7] C. M. Yonge, The Two Guardians, p. v. The quotations refer to Scenes and Characters and not to The Two Guardians.

next to her in age, are old enough to take her place and Eleanor marries the man who has waited so faithfully for her.

Eleanor's marriage is equivalent to the death of a parent. Her departure, although expected, leaves Emily and Lilias largely unprepared for their new responsibilities, just as if she had in fact died. These adolescent girls, eighteen and seventeen years old respectively when the novel opens, take prominent place in this first chronicle. There are nine Mohun children left after Eleanor's departure. The two eldest boys appear infrequently. William is in the Army and Claude is away much of the time at Oxford. The two youngest boys, Reginald and Maurice, attend a boarding school. Consequently Charlotte Yonge concentrates most of our attention on the reduced household of five young women.

Mr. Mohun, of course, remains technically the head of Beechcroft Court. But Miss Yonge makes him deaf and therefore somewhat remote from the children, and thus effectively removes him from the centre of the novel. However he is aware of the course of events, and in his place of authority he notes all that transpires and judges the development of his children.

The characteristics of a family chronicle are all quite apparent. The Mohun family is large, a parent is dead and her deputy removed, the two main characters, Emily and Lilias, and three others, Maurice, Reginald and Jane are all adolescents, new responsibilities have been given to at least Emily and Lilias and their success in carrying

them out is to be measured in terms of a theme. The key notion of this theme is the immediate claim of duty and it is the abstract idea of duty, in fact, which Emily and Lilias are discussing with their brother Claude when the novel opens.

Lilias, or Lily, complains to Claude that Eleanor's principle of behaviour, "duty, duty, duty," was inadequate because it meant "never making allowances--never relaxing her stiff rules about trifles--never unbending from her duenna like dignity--never showing one spark of enthusiasm. . . ." (Scenes, 20) In fact, Eleanor's rule has been satisfactory in every way except that she was remote from her sisters and they conclude that this was because she acted only from a sense of duty. Lilias is determined that the management of house and children will be conducted from a different principle, now that Eleanor has departed, and she has convinced Emily to accept her idea. She explains, "it is better that people should act upon love for its own sake, than upon duty for its own sake," (Scenes, 18)

The results, or lack of them, of the principle of love can be seen in the character development, during the next eighteen months, of Emily and Lilias themselves and the three sisters who, of all the children, are most under their control and influence, Jane, Phyllis and Adeline.

Phyllis and Ada are the youngest children but they are very different from each other. Phyllis is a tomboy; she is "without many actual faults" and yet she is "continually in scrapes." (Scenes, 25) Phyllis is awkward and therefore a "trial of patience" to her teachers; her

lessons in the schoolroom do not progress satisfactorily because, Miss Yonge indicates, neither of her teachers, Emily or Lilias, takes her instruction upon herself as a duty.

In the Mohun family Phyllis is called "honest Phyll" and the name calls attention to her sincerity and honesty. These are qualities which Phyllis maintains, even during the management of love. Therefore, Phyllis does not come to any harm because in the schoolroom she tried "to obey well-remembered orders of Eleanor" (Scenes, 250) and in her playtime Claude's advice helps her to see that "If you wish to do any thing right, you must learn self-control. . . ." (Scenes, 197) Phyllis is obedient to the instruction of her elders and Mr. Mohun observes, at the end of Emily's time of management, that although Phyllis "met with the same temptations, the same neglect, the same bad example, as her sister," (Scenes, 252) Ada, it had no effect on her character. She does not succumb to the temptations which arise in the badly run household and Mr. Mohun concludes, "I have long thought her a wonderful specimen of obedience." (Scenes, 283)

Even though Emily and Lilias do no great harm to Phyllis they fail in their duty to her. But in their failure in duty to Adeline we see more clearly the effects of behaviour which is not based on a firm understanding of duty. Ada's unfortunate development is the result of Lilias' misguided principle in general, and Emily's negligence in particular.

When Eleanor left the family, "Ada was a sweet-tempered, affectionate child . . . /and/ very free from

faults. . . ." (Scenes, 230) But Ada quickly loses "the habit of ready and implicit obedience" (Scenes, 230) although in her defence it must be noted that neither Lilias nor Emily require obedience as a matter of duty. The result is that Ada accepts sweets from her maid, cheats in her schoolwork, is flattered by attention and grows vain. Most of the blame for Ada's poor development is laid to Emily whose "mismanagement had fostered Ada's carelessness and inattention." (Scenes, 231)

Emily and Lilias are not as responsible for Jane's development as they are for Phyllis and Ada's, because Jane is old enough to be responsible for her own actions although still young enough to need the guidance of someone in authority. But Emily and Lilias do not provide that guidance and so Jane's development is highly unsatisfactory.

Jane has faults but will not see them. As her faults become prominent, it becomes "evident, even to others, that there was something very wrong about her." (Scenes, 142) Jane is responsible for some serious difficulties in the village. Because of her love of gossip, she repeats a conversation between her father and her cousin, the vicar, Mr. Devereux, in which a labourer's family is criticised. In retaliation the labourer's family refuse to have their baby baptised and they begin to attend the dissenting chapel. The matter is treated seriously for the eternal life of the child is at stake; but Jane will not recognize her part in the matter; "I cannot see that I was much to blame, I only talked to Mrs. Appleton. . . ." (Scenes, 51) Mr. Devereux warns her that her love of gossip is an "evil" (Scenes, 51) but Jane does not heed his warning.

On other occasions, too, her behaviour is questionable and her father says he is not "satisfied" with her or her "pertness." (Scenes, 143) Mr. Devereux believes her behaviour is so seriously at fault, that he gives her a serious warning:

> "I think, Jane, that the greatest and most dangerous fault of your character is, want of reverence. I think it is want of reverence which makes you press forward to that for which you confess yourself unfit [confirmation], it is want of reverence for holiness which makes you not care to attain it; want of reverence for the Holy Word; that makes you treat it as a mere lesson, and in small matters, your pertness is want of reverence for your superiors; you would not be ready to believe and to say the worst of others, if you reverenced what good there may be in them. Take care that your want of reverence is not in reality want of faith."(Scenes, 152)

Even so stern a warning, however, has no effect on Jane's behaviour and at length Mr. Devereux decides to deny Jane a confirmation ticket. However, fever strikes the household before he has the opportunity to inform Jane of his decision and she misses the confirmation in any case because she is ill. Even later when Jane learns of his decision she is not chastened and her development, which illustrates that "sorrow and suffering do not necessarily produce good effects," (Scenes, 247) contrasts sharply with that of Lilias.

Emily's behaviour and development also contrast sharply with those of Lilias' even though at the beginning of the chronicle both girls embrace the same rule of love. "Emily and I are determined to act on the principle of love, and you will see if her government is not more successful than

that of duty," (Scenes, 21) Lily explains hopefully to Claude at the beginning of their management. However, Emily does not behave according to the dictates of any principle of behaviour. "Emily's own views, as far as she possessed any, were to get on as smoothly as she could, and make everybody pleased and happy, without much trouble to herself. . . ." (Scenes, 21) Indeed, Emily takes little trouble in any area of the household management. She does not make a success of the school-room; she does not keep close care of the storeroom; she does not watch over her younger sisters; nor does she keep order in her own personal accounts. All of Emily's behaviour stems from "selfishness" (Scenes, 148) and her lack of management is everywhere evident.

When the eldest sibling, William, comes home on leave from the Army, he scolds Emily for the state of the household. In answer to her excuses, he says,

> "there are reasons to be found for every thing that goes wrong; but if you are wise, you would look deeper. Now, Emily, I do not wish to be hard upon you, for I know you are in a very difficult position, and very young for such a charge, but I am sure you might manage better. I do not think you use your energies. There is no activity, nor regularity, nor method about this household." (Scenes, 190)

Although at the moment Emily says she will try to do better the warning does not serve to alter her behaviour, "the good impulse of one instant was not likely to endure against long cherished habits of selfish apathy." (Scenes, 191)

As Emily's failures become more apparent, Lilias perceives the faults in her own behaviour and tries to

amend them. She takes up some household duties which Emily neglects and Emily takes advantage of Lily's willingness to help by giving her many duties while remaining blind to her own failures. "Emily had taken up the principle of love, and defended herself with it on every occasion, so that poor Lily was continually punished by having her past follies quoted against herself." (Scenes, 233)

Emily's mismanagement cannot go unnoticed. Mr. Mohun waits some time before he confronts Emily with her failure; he waits until he can place another person at the head of the household. This is accomplished by William's retirement from the Army and return to Beechcroft Court in order to marry the daughter of a neighbour. His wife will be the new mistress. Though Emily would naturally give up the management to William's wife, Mr. Mohun makes it clear to her that she would have had to give it up in any event:

> I am afraid to trust the management of the family to you any longer. Your trial is over, and you have failed, merely because you would not exert yourself, from wilful indolence and negligence. You have not attended to any one thing committed to your charge--you have . . . allowed Ada to take up habits which will not be easily corrected."(Scenes, 332)

It is in the matter of exertion that Miss Yonge most strongly contrasts the development of Emily and Lilias and thereby illustrates both the lesson in behaviour and the theme.

Emily, it is clear, acts from selfishness and indolence and uses the rule of love as her excuse. Lily, on the other hand, tries to exert herself from the beginning, it is only that her understanding of love and duty is not correct.

But Lily tries to do what is right. In an incident of minor importance which occurs near the beginning of the novel, Mr. Mohun gives Lily permission to read Scott's novels. So absorbed does she become that she neglects her tasks and Mr. Mohun says, "Your negligence has not yet been a serious fault, though remember, that it becomes so after warning." (Scenes, 26) Lily immediately reforms because she still has "old habits of obedience" (Scenes, 27) towards her father.

As time wears on Lily senses that something is wrong with the principle of love and that she has faults herself which need to be corrected. Her lack of success is greatly evident in the schoolroom and in general when faced with a difficult situation "she saw that her want of command of temper was a failure both in love and duty, and when irritated, the thought of duty came sooner to her aid, than the feeling of love." (Scenes, 88) Part of Lilias' problem is that although she is unhappy with herself, "she did not examine herself sufficiently to find out the real cause of her uncomfortable feelings." (Scenes, 183) But there is hope for improvement in Lily because, unlike Jane and Emily, she does recognize that she has faults.

The winter continues in an unsatisfactory manner.

> She had seen the fallacy of her principle of love, but in her self-willed adherence to it, she had lost the strong sense and habit of duty which had once ruled her; and in a vague and restless frame of mind she merely sought from day to day for pleasure and idle occupation. (Scenes, 214)

Lilias does not know how to break out of her unsatisfactory state until she is jolted by a very serious situation.

One day a village child approaches Lilias to ask for a poultice for another very ill child, Agnes Grey. In the confusion of events at home, Lily forgets to send the poultice. She only remembers when at church Mr. Devereux asks the congregation to pray for the child. Agnes Grey dies and her death is a great shock to Lilias although she was in no way to blame. She confesses to Mr. Devereux, "I know I have been in an odd idle way for some time; I have often resolved, but I seem to have no power over myself." (Scenes, 224)

Mr. Devereux counsels Lily to "find out in which duty you have most failed, and let the fulfillment of that be your proof of self-denial." (Scenes, 227) From the time of Agnes' death, Lily's behaviour slowly improves, "she daily became more steady in well-doing, and asserting herself on principle," (Scenes, 229) and the practical result of her efforts is that she takes up many of Emily's neglected duties. Lily can see the folly of "my hateful principle" (Scenes, 239) and the harm it has caused but now Emily is beyond her influence and she continually "acts upon it in everything." (Scenes, 239) Even with the great weight of Emily's failure added to her own and to the depression into which she falls, Lilias does "not neglect her daily duties; but was more exact in their fulfillment. . . ." (Scenes, 247)

It is just this attention to "daily duties" which Charlotte Yonge wishes to emphasise as correct behaviour. A "strict adherence to duty" has positive results. First Lily herself improves and Mr. Mohun, who judges the behaviour of all his daughters, comments to Claude, "This

year is, on many accounts, much to be regretted . . . but I think it has brought out Lily's character." (Scenes, 247) Secondly Lily does have a positive influence for good on the household and her father praises her for her efforts in this area, too.

> I wish to thank you for what you have done towards keeping this house in order. You have worked hard, and endured much, and from all I can gather, you have prevented much mischief. Much has unfairly been thrown upon you, and you have well and steadily done your duty." (Scenes, 295)

Duty is indeed the "key-note"[8] of this first chronicle. The degree to which each character, and especially Emily and Lilias, tries, or fails to try, to carry out her allotted tasks is the standard by which we measure her development. The ill effects of another guide, such as the principle of love, are most clearly shown in the disasterous result of Emily's management. The good effects produced by a "strict adherence to duty" provide a lesson to show that only obedience to the claims of duty meet with domestic success. This can be seen in the small domestic success which Lilias achieves as well as in her own improvement in character. Her successful development makes Lilias the heroine of the novel; "the history of the foundation of her character has been told, and all that remains to be said of her is, that the memory of her faults and her sorrows did not fleet away like a morning cloud, though followed by many happy and prosperous days. . . ." (Scenes, 349-50)

[8] C. M. Yonge, "Preface" The Two Guardians, p. v. She says that each of the five novels illustrates "some principle which may be called the key-note. . . ." See Chapter III, pp. 50 and 52.

iii

## The Daisy Chain; or, Aspirations. A Family Chronicle

The loss of a parent is a much more immediate disaster in The Daisy Chain (1856) compared to the long past death and removal of a mother substitute in Scenes and Characters. Mrs. May dies suddenly in a carriage accident near the beginning of the novel. Furthermore, her eldest daughter and natural successor, Margaret, is invalided for life at the same time, while her youngest is barely six weeks old. Thus the situation that the adolescents confront and the problems that arise from it are of an altogether more serious nature than are those which confront Emily and Lilias. The Mays' personal problems of growth are of a more serious nature and their characters are explored in greater depth than was attempted in Scenes and Characters. In consequence the chronicle of the May family covers about seven years as compared to the eighteen months covered by the earlier novel.

Margaret May, the invalid, is nineteen when the novel opens. She is sensitive, excitable and feminine. Her couch in the drawing room is the focus of family activity. Her elder brother, Richard, of whom she is especially fond, is studying to be a clergyman. Next to Margaret in age come Flora, Norman and Ethel. They are the adolescents whose development is the major concern of the novel and whose development will concern us here. Even when Norman goes up to Oxford our interest in his progress is maintained. Next to them come Harry, Mary and Tom, who grow into adolescence and therefore prominence, as the book progresses. Even the youngest members of the family, Blanche, Aubrey

and the baby Gertrude, nicknamed Daisy, make significant progress in character formation.

The theme of The Daisy Chain has a prominence and a complexity that was denied the simple notions of love and duty that Lilias developed in Scenes and Characters. Miss Yonge points to the theme in the subtitle to the novel, Aspirations. She explains the subtitle in her Preface when she says that this chronicle is "an endeavour to trace the effects of those aspirations which are a part of every youthful nature."[9] However, the theme is more serious and complicated than this; it incorporates two concepts which might at first glance seem contradictory. One is the force behind aspirations, namely ambition, and the other, by means of which we judge the nature of the ambitions of the characters, is religion. In the Preface Miss Yonge tells us that an important consideration for "the young" is whether or not "their hopes and upward-breathings are truly upwards and founded in lowliness. . . ." (Daisy, vii) Indeed Miss Yonge is at pains to show, particularly in the development of one sister's character, the unhappy outcome when ambition is not founded in lowliness. But the main purpose of the book is to show how religion and ambition can in fact be combined successfully.

The theme of the novel appears early in the chronicle, before Mrs. May's death, during a discussion of the Gospel lesson for the day. Ethel comments that the passage which

9 The Daisy Chain; or, Aspirations. A Family Chronicle. (London: Macmillan and Co., 1894), p. vii. Hereafter all quotations from this work in this section will be followed by Daisy and a page number in parenthesis.

she particularly likes is "They who now sit lowest here,/ When their Master shall appear,/ He shall bid them higher rise,/ And be highest in the skies." (Daisy, 15) Her remark brings comments on ambition from several of the assembled children and from Mrs. May who says,

> "It is a lesson how those least known and regarded here, and humblest in their own eyes, shall be the highest hereafter."
> . . . . . .
>
> "It means altogether--it is a lesson against ambition," said she /Ethel/.
> "True," said her mother, "the love of eminence for its own sake."
> "And in so many different ways!" said Margaret.
> "Aye, worldly greatness, riches, rank, beauty," said Flora.
> "All sorts of false flash, and nonsense, and liking to be higher than one ought to be," said Norman. "I am sure there is nothing lower, or more mean and shabby, than getting places and praise a fellow does not deserve."
> "Oh, yes!" cried Ethel, "but no one fit to speak to would do that!"
> "Plenty of people do, I can tell you," said Norman.
> "Then I hope I shall never know who they are!" exclaimed Ethel. "But I'll tell you what I was thinking of, Mamma. Caring to be clever, and get on, only for the sake of beating people."
> "I think that might be better expressed."
> "I know," said Ethel, bending her brow, with the fulness of her thought--"I mean caring to do a thing only because nobody else can do it--wanting to be first more than wanting to do one's best."
> "You are quite right my dear Ethel," said her mother; "and I am glad you have found in the Gospel a practical lesson. that should be useful to you both." (Daisy, 5-6)

It is significant that the characters discuss not humility, which is the lesson of the lines of poetry but its opposite, ambition, which often signifies a lack of humility. Mrs. May makes the point by suggesting that an unacceptable result of ambition is the desire to be above others, to achieve eminence

for its own sake. This is ambition which is not founded on lowliness. Three of Mrs. May's children taking part in the conversation, Flora, Ethel and Norman, are destined to have to struggle with their lack of humility and with their desire for eminence. The form which each individual struggle is to take is indicated in the conversation as they each reveal, without being aware of it, those aspects of their character which make them most vulnerable.

Flora's ambition is for "worldly greatness, riches, rank," which are hardly "aspirations" of a spiritual nature. Her later troubles all occur because she gives in to her desire for material things. Norman's statement about "false flash and nonsense," and liking to be "higher than one ought to be," reflects his school life and it is in fact in school that he is later called upon to struggle with his particular devil. His ambition is to deserve eminence. He does not discount the ambition to "places and praise" as such, only when they are obtained when "not deserve/d/." The narrow dividing line between deserved and undeserved praise is one which causes Norman much pain and discomfort.

Ethel seems to dismiss Norman's comments. She turns from the examples of ambition for eminence and tries to state a more general principle about the lesson on ambition. Characteristically Ethel's first expression is awkward and not precise. Her second attempt draws a distinction between "wanting to be first more than wanting to do one's best." The hard lesson which Ethel learns is that trying to do her best can be difficult and can require her to make hard personal sacrifices.

The novel traces the affects of the aspirations of all the characters, but particularly those three, and shows that aspirations, which are not "founded in lowliness," and which do not base themselves on the wish "to do one's best" as regards domestic duties, are certain to be disastrous. To make the point quite clear Charlotte Yonge has Norman and Ethel reopen the discussion on ambition.

During the afternoon of the same day a party of Mays with their governess and a visitor, Alan Ernscliffe, journey to the very poor neighbouring hamlet of Cocksmoor. On the journey toward the hamlet Ethel and Norman, who favour each other's company, continue their discussion of ambition, this time in relation to Norman's next school essay on Decius.[10] The brother and sister differ in their assessment of whether or not Decius should be ambitious for fame.

> "I'll tell you what Norman, if I was you, I would not make Decius flatter himself with the fame he was to get--it is too like that stuff everyone talks in stupid books. I want him to say--Rome--my country--the eagles--must win, if they do--never mind what becomes of me."
>
> "But why should he not like to get the credit of it, as he did? Fame and glory--they are the spirit of life, the reward of such a death."
>
> "O no, no," said Ethel. "Fame is coarse and vulgar--blinder than ever they draw Love or Fortune--she is only a personified newspaper trumpeting out all that is extraordinary, without minding whether it is good or bad. She misses the delicate and lovely--I wished they would give us a theme to write about her, I should like to abuse her well."

[10] Publius Decius Mus. One of the Roman consuls at the time of the Latin war of 340 B.C. According to legend he gained the victory for his side by solemnly devoting himself and the enemy to destruction in battle, and rushing to his death. See Sir Paul Harvey, ed., Oxford Companion to Classical Literature (Oxford at the Clarendon Press, 1962), p. 136.

> "It would make a very good theme, in a new line," said Norman; "but I don't give into it, altogether. It is the hope and the thought of fame, that has made men great, from the first to last. It is in every one that is not good for nothing, and always will be! The moving spirit of man's greatness:"
>
> "I'm not sure," said Ethel; "I think looking for fame is like wanting a reward at once. I had rather people forgot themselves. Do you think Arnold von Winkelried thought about fame, when he threw himself on the spears?"
>
> "He got it," said Norman.
>
> "Yes; he got it for the good of other people, not to please himself. Fame does those that admire it good, not those that win it."
>
> "But!" said Norman, and both were silent. . . .(Daisy, 19)

In the morning's conversation, Norman's contribution was expressed in a negative statement. He was against getting places and praise not deserved, but on this occasion he expresses his ideas on ambition with affirmative statements. He gives ambition for fame and glory credit for good actions because fame and glory inspire men to do good. Ethel objects that this is not necessarily true because men often do what "is extraordinary, without minding whether it is good or bad." She would rather men forget themselves and act from a conviction of what is right. The views which Norman and Ethel express are consistent with their actions later in the novel. Norman is ambitious for high places and praise and despite his disclaimers to the contrary, his motive is to see himself elevated above others. In contrast Ethel's ambition, although it calls for her to exert herself, is in no way motivated by self-interest.

Ethel discovers her ambition while the party are visiting the poor inhabitants at Cocksmoor. There is no place of worship in the hamlet and the fact that the inhabitants

have little opportunity for moral or spiritual guidance impresses itself upon her. She reflects upon this and then on the homeward walk exclaims, "There would be a worthy ambition! . . . Let us propose that aim to ourselves, to build a church on Cocksmoor!" (Daisy, 20) There can be no doubt, as Ethel recognizes, that such an ambition is "worthy" because it is for the glory of God and it is apparently in no way self elevating. Thus from the moment of inspiration to her ambition Ethel combines in a satisfactory manner the two aspects of this chronicle's theme, religion and ambition. Ethel, of course, does not yet understand the complex nature of this undertaking; she has seen the need of the inhabitants for a place in which to worship and, as the church is important in her own life, she has a desire to help the deprived people. At first the others do not take her proposal seriously but as time passes the idea grows in Ethel's mind and gradually the scheme engages first the attention and then the co-operation of the entire May family. Presumably, even if it is worthy or religiously inspired, the scheme could be bad if it led Ethel to disregard her duty or disobey her superiors. However, at no time is Ethel's ambition allowed to interfere either with her domestic duties or her obedience to her father. Ethel does have problems, even with this ambition, but they are never allowed to sully her worthy, God inspired, project.

Flora's ambition is neither intellectual nor spiritual but ultimately material. As they reach home after their walk to Cocksmoor, the Mays are greeted with the

news of the carriage accident, of Margaret's grave injury and their mother's death. In the sorrow and confusion of the next few days, when there is much to be done in the way of nursing and household affairs, Flora as the second daughter, naturally assumes much responsibility. She carries out her duties well and takes pleasure in the importance of her new role. Later she muses,

> I see, on an emergency, that I know how to act. I never thought I was capable of so much use, thanks to dear, dear mamma's training. I shall manage, I am sure and so they will all depend on me, and look up to me. How nice it was to hear dear papa say what he did about the comfort of my being able to look after Margaret. (Daisy, 36)

We learn from her reverie that Flora's ambition, in this instance, is for praise, in contrast to the wish to carry out her duties which motivates Ethel.

Miss Yonge shows that the desire for praise has always been a dangerous facet of Flora's personality. A half-finished letter by Mrs. May to her sister who lives in New Zealand points out the deep-rooted difficulty. Mrs. May writes that in Flora "the childish love of admiration was subdued" but that there still lurks a danger "not of beauty-vanity but that she will find temptation in the being everywhere liked and sought after." (Daisy, 45) This is a particularly dangerous development because outwardly Flora seems dutiful and obedient, even lowly, but inwardly she is ambitious for status and the means to power, goals which she appeared to renounce in the family discussion.

Her temptation is ever present and is complicated by her misinterpretation of the prerogatives of her new role. Because she has taken up the major portion of the duties

in Dr. May's household, she believes that this entitles her to ignore the rule of obedience to her father. Miss Yonge gives us a small example of Flora's disobedient behaviour in order to indicate her state of mind. When Alan Ernscliffe comes to take leave of his fiancée, Margaret, Dr. May orders the children out of the house so that the lovers may talk privately. Flora, however, secretes herself in her bedroom and thus disobeys her father. She exclaims to Ethel, "I shall sit here." Ethel expresses horror at her sister's disobedience, but Flora argues, "it is not right that Margaret should be left without anyone at hand in case she should be overcome. . . . I am not bound to obey to the very letter like Blanche or Mary." (Daisy, 266)

Nothing serious arises from this minor example of Flora's independent and disobedient behaviour. However, by this small token Miss Yonge shows that the foundation for a later and much graver error has been laid. This error is her decision to marry in disregard of her father and in furtherance of her own ambitions. Moreover, because her marriage causes her to abandon her rightful duties, which then fall to Ethel who is less able and less prepared than she to handle them, she is guilty of both disobedience to her father and disregard of her duty. To thus offend against both of Miss Yonge's ideals, calls, as we shall see, for dire punishment indeed.

Flora's marriage is the inevitable result of her growing ambition. Perhaps at first she is content as mistress of her father's household. However in time she decides to enlarge her sphere of influence in Stoneborough

and she joins the Ladies' Committee. The explanation she gives to Ethel for joining the committee shows that she has no desire to do good, only the desire to promote her importance.

> "You see we have the prestige of better birth, and better education, as well as having the chief property in the town, and of being the largest subscribers, added to his /Dr. May's/ personal character . . . so that everything conspires to render us leaders, and our age alone prevented us from assuming our post sooner." (Daisy, 337)

There is no reason to suppose that Flora's position on the Ladies' Committee in any way hinders her ability to carry out her household duties. Whereas the opposite is true, of course, of her next ambitious step, the decision to marry.

Flora recognizes that the new inhabitants of Abbottstoke, the Rivers, are the most influential and wealthy people in the area. Mr. Rivers, a widower, has a son and a daughter. The May family delights in their friendship with the beautiful Meta Rivers. But George, the son, is stupid and not generally liked by the Mays. Even so the temptation to be the future mistress of Abbottstoke overcomes the ambitious Flora. Dr. May has sound objections to the match and Flora should obey the command implicit in her father's objections; but she disregards his opinion and accepts George's proposal of marriage.

On her wedding day Flora maintains her cool composed manner except for a brief time in her sister Margaret's room. Ethel comes in to find that "she had fairly

broken down (Daisy, 360) and was "sobbing--as Ethel had never seen her weep except on that dreadful night, after their mother's death." (Daisy, 361) She seeks comfort from her elder sister and Ethel thinks she hears Flora say, "Oh! What have I done? It is not worth it." (Daisy, 361) However there is no time for Ethel to reflect on these words; Flora immediately composes herself and the wedding takes place as planned. Even though there is no positive or absolute reason to be dismayed by the marriage, Flora's reasons for desiring it are definitely suspect and it is a telling point when Ethel's hand shakes so that she cannot sign her name as a witness to the ceremony.

There is no doubt that Flora enjoys for a time the pleasures of her ambitious match. She returns from her honeymoon laden with gifts for the family. "Flora was in her glory. To be able to bestow benefits on those whom she loved, had always been a favourite vision and she had the full pleasure of feeling how much enjoyment she was causing." (Daisy, 372) Some time later George's father dies and Flora becomes the mistress of the largest estate in the neighbourhood. She has obtained riches and rank and by pushing her husband into Parliament she widens even further her sphere of influence.

The Parliamentary career takes Flora and George to London where Flora enjoys the society of high ranking people, and it is in London where Flora is "stricken down in the midst of the prosperity that she had sought." (Daisy, 508) Flora and George have a child, a daughter

whom they name Leonora for one of George's prominent relatives. But the daughter is "set aside" by Flora so that she may attend not to her duties but to her "many avocations." (Daisy, 506) Such flagrant disregard of the dictates of duty calls for severe retribution and it is inflicted upon her. Unfortunately the nurse who cares for the baby is "not high principled" (Daisy, 506) and keeps her quiet with Godfrey's cordial.[11] When the baby falls into a stupor Flora calls for her father but he arrives only to have the baby die in his arms. Flora is inconsolable. She believes she is responsible for the baby's death through her own neglect and that she will never see the child again after her own death. She believes in fact that she has lost her own everlasting soul.

For Flora the death of her child is a punishment for her ambition. The child's death brings a time of "true reality" which "rend/s/ aside every wilful cloak of self-deceit and self-approbation." (Daisy, 511) Flora can see herself and she has no hope for her soul. She confesses to her father that "I have never set my heart right." With the death of her child, she believes "now it is too late; and He has let me destroy my child here, lest I should have destroyed her Everlasting Life, like my own." (Daisy, 511) The theme of the novel, we must remember, combines ambition and religion. Until this point in Flora's development it has been the ambitious side of her character which was foremost but with the shock of the child's death Flora's religious failings are made

[11] Godfrey's cordial was a mixture of laudanum and treacle intended to keep babies pacified. C. S. Peel, "Homes and Habits," p. 109.

apparent, at least to herself. In the great calamity Flora sees herself as she is and

> now that her delusion had been broken down, she had nothing to rest upon. Her whole religious life had been mechanical, deceiving herself more than even others, and all seemed now swept away except the sense of hypocrisy, and of having cut herself off, for ever, from her innocent child. (Daisy, 512)

The lack of true religious belief has led Flora to make a domestic error, an error which caused or helped to cause the child's death. She hired a nurse who had no "high religious principle to teach her obedience, or sincerity." (Daisy, 516) Thus want of religion is shown to have a real and immediate effect on domestic life. Later Flora advises the nurse to live by "strict obedience and truth henceforth; the want of them will have worse results by and by than even this." (Daisy, 516) The truth is that Flora herself has been consistently negligent of her duty and indifferent to the demands of obedience.

Norman's development is less complex than Flora's largely because he retains his dutiful and obedient attitude toward his father even though he has self-elevating ambition. Norman's continuing reverence and love for his father save him from the depths to which Flora falls. Although he remains obedient in home matters, both at school and later at University he allows ambition to tempt him.

Intellectual ambition begins for Norman in school. As was evident in his discussion of Decius, Norman both values and wishes to win fame. He confesses to his father that he has valued "getting on, and having prizes and

scholarships" (Daisy, 208) more as signs of achievement than just as rewards. The self-elevating aspect of his achievement he knows is wrong because he dreams that his mother rebukes him and says, "it was all ambition." (Daisy, 107)

At school Norman's outstanding scholastic achievement wins for him at an unusually early age the title of Dux. Unfortunately, however, he enjoys the prestige only for a short time. The Headmaster erroneously believes Norman to be responsible for mischievous and dishonourable conduct and so takes the title from him. Norman feels deeply hurt by the incident but in his sorrow he admits that he has lacked humility towards the other boys. To his father he says,

> "It does not do for me to be the first; I have been what she /his mother/ called elated, and been more peremptory than need with the lower boys, and gone on in my old way with Richard, and so I suppose this disgrace has come to punish me. I wish it were not disgrace, because of our name at school, and because it will vex Harry so much; but since it is come, considering all things, I suppose I ought not to struggle to justify myself at other people's expense."(Daisy, 208)

Norman therefore accepts the punishment meekly and humbly and in time the truth of the situation comes to light. He not only redeems his name at school but wins a scholarship to Oxford.

Unfortunately at Oxford Norman's intellectual ambition places him in another difficult situation. He allows himself to become involved in religious discussion and, as a result, Norman experiences a period of doubt. When the doubt has been conquered Norman confesses to

Ethel of his struggle. "I have been bewildered; till, Ethel, I felt as if the ground were slipping from beneath my feet, and I have only been able to hide my eyes, and entreat that I might know the truth." (Daisy, 460)

John Keble had warned Charlotte Yonge "against too much talk and discussion of Church matters, especially doctrines. . . ."[12] In consequence she had no sympathy for that aspect of intellectual life and even to question church doctrine was for her a very serious matter, for she believed it led almost inevitably to doubt. However, belief was two-fold, of heart and of mind. Thus Ethel can console Norman by answering his confession with these words, "Norman, you believed, all the time, with your heart. This was only a bewilderment of your intellect." (Daisy, 461) If Norman had given up his heart's belief too, then he might have been abandoned to his fate, but because he held on to it he is allowed to redeem himself.

Norman comes to understand that his intellectual ambition caused him to question his faith. He therefore judges that he cannot cope with an intellectual life, and, in order to redeem his religious error, he decides to follow a religious life. He asks Ethel, "Do you think it would give my father too much pain to part with me as a Missionary to New Zealand?" Ethel's reply shows that he has indeed chosen a great course. She says, "O Norman,

[12] Charlotte M. Yonge, Musings over the Christian Year, p. 10.

it is the most glorious thing man can do: How I wish I could go with you![13] (Daisy, 459)

Ethel, of course, cannot go to New Zealand as a missionary because she has become the mistress of her father's house and the "mother" of at least three of the youngest Mays. Nevertheless Ethel is a missionary in England for it is her idea, her energy and her perseverance which are largely responsible first for a school and then for the church at Cocksmoor. Like Norman and Flora, Ethel has to struggle to overcome her shortcomings. But unlike her sisters and brothers, Ethel attempts to improve herself in order to meet the demands of a worthy ambition, which is truly founded in lowliness, so her efforts and her ambition meet with success.

She explains to Richard:

> "The history of it is this. Last time we walked here /Cocksmoor/, that day, I said, and I meant it, that I would never put it out of my head; I would go on doing and striving, and trying, till this place was properly cared for, and has a church and a clergyman. I believe it was a vow, Richard, I do believe it was--and if one makes one, one must keep it. There it is. So, I can't give money. I have but one pound in the world, but I have time, and I would make that useful, if you would help me." (Daisy, 51)

Both recognize that the establishment of a church is beyond their means but Richard agrees to help Ethel with a plan they can carry out. They start a school so that the children

[13] See Houghton, The Victorian Frame of Mind, p. 239. Norman May's doubts at Oxford and his desire to be a missionary, for "the simplest, hardest work . . . forgetting subtle arguments," is given as an example by Houghton of hard work as a cure for a doubting mind.

can learn to read the Bible. It is the first step toward the success of Ethel's plan.

Ethel works hard for Cocksmoor, even when she discovers that the task has no glamour. "Rough heads, torn garments, staring vacant eyes, and mouths gaping in shy rudeness--it was a sight to disenchant her of visions of pleasure in the work she has set herself." (Daisy, 145) It is important to note why Ethel continues in the task regardless. She teaches the children church doctrine and she believes that in doing so she helps to save them from damnation. Ethel has recognized, accepted and is trying to carry out her duty. In a moment of emotion and confusion the awkward Ethel tries to explain to Margaret and Richard her reasons for working at Cocksmoor:

> "Why, these, these--what they call formal--these the ties--links on to the Church--on to what is good--if they don't learn these soundly--rammed down hard--you know what I mean--so that they can't remember the first--remember when they did not know them--they will never get to learn--know--understand when they can understand!" (Daisy, 228-9)

Ethel's reasoning even though emotional shows another facet of her acceptable even commendable combination of ambition and religion.

However, Ethel does not escape paying a personal price for the school even though her motives are both selfless and religious. The school and her home duties take up a great deal of her time and she finds that she cannot keep up her beloved classical studies. Of course home and religious duties must come before personal pleasures and so Ethel reluctantly gives up her study of Greek, a study which she shared with Norman.

This is in fact a small sacrifice to make for the good of the Cocksmoor children, whereas the sacrifice which she later makes in order to maintain her home duties is a far greater one. With Margaret's slow decline and eventual death and Flora's engagement and marriage, Ethel's duties in the house increase until she becomes its sole mistress. She sees the distress caused her father by Flora's marriage and she vows "that her father should never feel this pain on her account."

> Leave him who might, she would never forsake him; nothing but the will of Heaven should part them. It might be hasty and venturesome. She knew not what it might cost her; but, where Ethel had treasured her resolve to work for Cocksmoor, there she also laid her secret vow--that no earthly object should be placed between her and her father. (Daisy, 350)

When Ethel's second vow comes to be tested she remembers and keeps it and thereby gives up the chance to marry her brother's close friend at Oxford, Norman Ogilvie.

Ethel meets Norman Ogilvie when she, Meta Rivers, Flora and her husband journey to Oxford in order to hear Norman May give the Newdigate Prize Speech. The attraction between the two grows unconsciously but when Dr. May arrives on the last day of the visit, Ethel realizes how engrossed she has become with her brother's friend. As soon as she recognizes the danger of forming an attachment she leaves Oxford. Her sense of home duties and the strength of her vow draw her, although reluctantly, toward home. Ethel will not abandon the position which fell to her lot with Flora's marriage. Later Flora comes to understand Ethel's actions and she grieves over the

necessity for her sister's sacrifice. "I left her all my work at home. If it had not been for that, she might have been happy with Norman Ogilvie--for never were two people better matched. . . ." (Daisy, 655)

This sacrifice causes Ethel some sorrow but not long after she has the very great pleasure of witnessing step by step the building of a church on Cocksmoor. The money for the church does not come from Ethel's savings. It comes unexpectedly as a gift from Margaret's fiancé who had walked with the Mays on their first trip to the hamlet. Alan unfortunately loses his life at sea, but in his will he provides for the church and the May family realize that it is his special remembrance to Margaret with whom he had often discussed Ethel's idea.

All the Mays come together for the dedication ceremony which takes place near the end of the novel. For Flora, Norman and Ethel the dedication ceremony initiates a time of reflection. Flora and her husband return to Stoneborough for the event. Flora has suffered greatly since her child's death. She is in a state of despair and will not hope for forgiveness from her Heavenly Father. Margaret, of course, cannot attend the dedication ceremony and Flora undertakes to stay with her. She reads the service and is deeply moved by its message.

> "'If they return to Thee with all their heart and with all their soul in the land of their captivity, whither they have carried them captives, and pray toward their land, which Thou gavest unto their fathers, and toward the City which Thou hast chosen, and toward the House which I have built for Thy Name; then hear Thou from the Heavens, even from Thy dwellingplace--'"

> Flora could go no further; she strove, but one of her tearless sobs cut her short. She turned her face aside, and, as Margaret began to say something tender, she exclaimed, with low, hasty utterance, "Margaret! Margaret! pray for me! for it is a hard captivity, and my heart is very, very sore. Oh! pray for me, that it may all be forgiven me--and that I may see my child again! (Daisy, 569)

With this outburst Flora demonstrates a new humble attitude toward her religion and we may hope for her eventual redemption. Shortly thereafter she gives birth to another daughter. This second daughter is named Margaret. It is significant that the baby is named for Mrs. May rather than to seek acceptance from one of her husband's rich relations. In addition, the child's safety is assured; Flora takes the May family nurse who is no longer needed by the youngest Mays. She will not make foolish or harmful judgments because her faith is secure.

The birth of the second child is a difficult time for Flora who fears she is not worthy to have another. child. In her distress she is forced to turn to others and the last barrier against her redemption is broken down. Gradually her "proud reserve /which/ was the true evil" (Daisy, 591) gives way. Flora turns to her aunt, her mother's sister who has come from Australia and who is so like Mrs. May, to her sister Ethel and finally to her eldest brother, Richard, from whom she gets spiritual advice.

Flora is so repentant that she wishes to give up the "worldly greatness" of London and Parliamentary life. But after talking with Richard she realizes that "for George's sake, I must bear with my present life, and do the best I

can with it, unless some leading comes for an escape; and that the glare, and weariness, and being spoken well of, must be taken as punishment for having sought after these things." (Daisy, 591) We leave Flora in this frame of mind. Ethel has said that "Duty brings peace," (Daisy, 588) and Flora's last remark in the novel is "I must work till the time of rest comes!" (Daisy, 591)

Flora has suffered much. The eminence she sought has become her punishment. Her redemption to a dutiful, humble life in which religious beliefs now have their rightful value is a forceful lesson against worldly ambitions. Although Flora married for money, all along we are aware that she is fond of her husband and she never shirks the demands he makes on her time and energy. It is not in her outward actions but in her inner life that Flora was lacking and her redemption as a Christian woman becomes a positive lesson in moral behaviour.

Norman, by the time of the dedication service, has begun his own redemptive course in life. Proof of this is his imminent departure for New Zealand. At a pre-dedication meeting his self-awareness and his religious resolution are tested. He delivers an excellent speech and a prominent London figure extends to him the offer of a political career. It is just the kind of career Norman's ambition desired. But Norman has turned from this course of life. He admits to his father that

> 'Time was that I should have grasped at such a prospect! . . . but I am not the man for it. I have too much ambition, and too little humility. You know, father, how often you have had to come to my rescue, when I was running after success as my prime object."(Daisy, 547)

Thus at last Norman is able to reconcile ambition and religion.

The two aspects of the theme have been satisfactorily integrated in Ethel throughout the novel. For her, the dedication ceremony signifies most of all the chance of salvation for the Cocksmoor inhabitants and not the realization of her own ambition. However, Ethel like Flora and Norman has passed through a very important stage in her development. This stage is marked by the gradual acceptance of duties which were not initially congenial to her. Her sense of duty leads her to meet all her family obligations as best she may. Ethel is too unselfconscious a character to reflect on her own development, but during a conversation between Margaret and their aunt, Mrs. Arnott, Margaret says,

> "It is really doing everything with all her might /that characterizes Ethel/. Little, simple, everyday matters do not come naturally to her as to other people and the having had to make them duties has taught her to do them with that earnest manner as if there were a right and wrong to her in each little mechanical household office." (Daisy, 560)

She is, of course, aided in this development by her strong religious convictions. Indeed her worthy ambition has helped Ethel improve in the performance of her duties. "Cocksmoor gave the stimulus, and made Ethel what she is," Margaret adds. (Daisy, 560)

Moreover, Ethel's ambition has influenced for the better all the members of the May family. This is the final affirmation of the power for good that can be created by the combination of worthy ambition and religion. The Stoneborough vicar remarks that the church at Cocksmoor

has been a blessing to the inhabitants, to Margaret as she lay dying and to all the May family. He says "Not only Ethel and Richard, who have been immediately concerned, but that one object has been a centre and aim to elevate the whole family, and give force and unity to their efforts." (Daisy, 522-3)

iv

The Pillars of the House; or, Under Wode, Under Rode

In The Pillars of the House (1873) the family chronicle characteristics receive their fullest treatment. This chronicle, as we have already noted, is by far the longest and Miss Yonge makes full use of the greatly increased length. Although Felix, the eldest child, is only sixteen on the day the novel begins, there are in all thirteen children in the Underwood family. Furthermore the novel covers a period of over seventeen years so that all the children experience adolescence. Both parents die, the Rev. Mr. Underwood from consumption and Mrs. Underwood from complications after the births of the twins, Stella and Theodore.

The problems which the family encounter derive not only from the inevitable adjustment of authority and responsibility, as we have seen in The Daisy Chain and to a lesser extent in Scenes and Characters, but also from the totally impoverished state of the family once their father's income has been lost to them. Financial responsibility falls largely to Felix and as his only chance of keeping the family together is to accept work below his social standing, the family must also contend

with a loss of social status and must struggle to maintain the dignity of the family name.

In the face of all these difficulties, the responsibility for maintaining the Underwood household falls jointly but unequally upon the eight eldest children. However, for one reason or another, four of them escape the main burden and it is left to Felix, Wilmet, Cherry and Lance to carry it. They, then, are the pillars of the house. Felix has the most crushing load of responsibility to bear, but bear it he does. Of all Miss Yonge's chronicled characters he is the most successful in undertaking his duties in obedience to higher laws. After Felix in age come the twins Wilmet and Alda Mary. Wilmet undertakes the management of household affairs but Alda Mary does not share these responsibilities. Instead she grasps the opportunity, ceded to her by Wilmet, to live in London with some wealthy cousins, who raise her as their own daughter. Edgar, the next in age, should have been a great help to Felix, especially in financial matters, but, as we shall see, he rejects his family obligations. Cherry, the third daughter whose name is really Geraldine, is an invalid. Thus she can not at first share Wilmet's duties, nor flee the scene as Alda Mary does. However, she accepts her share of responsibility for the family and this share increases as the novel progresses.

Clement, who is about eleven when the children are orphaned, becomes the clergyman that Felix was originally meant to be. In fact Felix says, "I have always looked

on Clement as my own substitute. Indeed, I held that hope out to my father, when it distressed him that I should give it up."[14] Clement's role in life is honourable but not that of a pillar. Fulbert, the next brother, also takes a different course. Felix accepts for Fulbert the opportunity of a new life in Australia under the guidance of their father's junior curate, Mr. Audley. The novel is full of the comings and goings of characters but only Fulbert is absent for the great majority of it, reappearing only at the very end. Thus the task of helping the overworked Felix, especially in difficult financial matters falls eventually to Lancelot, who is some eight years his junior. The contrast between Lance and Edgar, the second eldest brother, is most marked and of the two it is Lance who wins the distinction of being a pillar.

The five younger children absorb most of the attention of the pillars. They have to be provided for and brought up. In the course of the novel Robina, Angela, Bernard and the twins Stella and Theodore, all grow into adolescence, although Theodore's development is slow because he is mentally retarded. However, none of them has to accept great responsibility and so, although Miss Yonge develops their lives in detail, they will not receive much of our attention.

[14] C. M. Yonge, The Pillars of the House; or, Under Wode, Under Rode, 2 vols. (London: Macmillan and Co., 1889), I, 210. Hereafter all quotations from this work in this chapter will be followed by Pillars, volume number and page number in parenthesis.

In line with the full treatment of the other chronicle characteristics, Miss Yonge's theme in the novel is of greater significance than that of either The Daisy Chain or Scenes and Characters. Miss Yonge gives the theme in her subtitle to the novel, Under Wode, Under Rode. This is the motto of the Underwood family. Mr. Underwood explains the meaning of the motto to Felix. He says, "The load is the cross. Bear thy cross, and thy cross will bear thee. . . . Rod and Rood, Cross and Crutch--all the same etymologically and veritably." (Pillars, I, 35) Mr. Underwood refers specifically to the domestic burdens which Felix will shortly have to take up. The motto implies that as Christ had to bear his cross so Christians must bear their burdens, and if they do, the burdens become an aid or crutch in life. The theme, however, does not apply only to Felix, it is a standard by which the success or failure of all the members of the family can be measured.

Just before his death Mr. Underwood gives the newly born twins to his eldest children. The theme is further stressed when he says that joy will come with love for Stella and Theodore "if you make the burden a blessing--the cross a crutch. . . ." (Pillars, I, 74-5) We will note the theme of burden and blessing, cross and crutch, particularly in the lives of Felix, Edgar and Lance, but the connection of "Under Wode, Under Rode" even to their lives is for the most part by implication. As we have seen in other domestic novels, Miss Yonge was reluctant to discuss religious ideas, rather she illustrated her beliefs.

She shows two contrasting attitudes towards the family burdens in Lance and Edgar. A few hours before Mr. Underwood's death, the vicar of Bexley administers the Epiphany Feast in the sick man's bedroom. Mr. Underwood gathers round him those of his children who have been confirmed and also Cherry his "last pupil." (Pillars, I, 60) However Edgar has gone off skating with some of his younger brothers and he misses the service. Mr. Underwood "looked disappointed" (Pillars, I, 60) when told of Edgar's absence. Although accidental, when we consider the course of Edgar's life it seems particularly significant that he missed his last opportunity to celebrate communion with his father; for Edgar rejects the Christian burden. His development contrasts sharply with that of Lance who accepts many family burdens when he grows older. Both boys are talented and each boy's talent, Edgar's for art and Lance's for music, tempts him to leave his home duties in order to further his own artistic development. Edgar meets temptation in London.

The London cousins, who have taken Alda Mary to bring up as their own daughter, offer a job in the family business to an Underwood son. Felix cannot accept the offer because he has become head of the household. So the offer falls to the lot of Edgar, the second son. However an office job does not suit Edgar's artistic nature. Yet Miss Yonge wishes us to understand that such an opportunity should be accepted by Edgar as a duty because it would help the family financially. Edgar cannot bring himself to

accept a real but mundane opportunity to help the family. After a short time Edgar gives up the position in order to follow his own inclination. He dreams that he will dramatically rescue his brothers and sisters by achieving success as an artist. Just before their father's death, Edgar had exclaimed to Cherry, "Now a start is all I want! Give me my one step--and then--O Gerald, someday I'll lift you all up!" Felix's goodnatured reply is "What's that? . . . Edgar lifting us all! What a bounce we should all come down with!" (Pillars, I, 25) Felix's analysis proves to be right for Edgar's expectations fail to materialize.

The source of Edgar's failure, first hinted at by his absence from the Epiphany Feast, is his total rejection of Church obligations. Thus he has no guide by which to rule his life. The total rejection of the Christian burden, of both home duties and church observances, becomes evident soon after he leaves home. Felix treats the matter very seriously but he is unable to influence his brother.

> He perceived that the door between his favourite brother's soul and his own was closed, and that knocking would only cause it to be bolted and barred. It might be true, as Mr. Audley [the curate] had told him, that Edgar's was not so much real scepticism as the talk of the day, and the regarding the doubts of deeper thinkers as a dispensation from all irksome claims. . . . (Pillars, I, 229)

The family cannot follow the course of Edgar's development because his activities take place in London. However by the time Lance has grown to the age when he too could put his talent to use, Edgar has seemingly

achieved a moderate success. Lance with the aid of a scholarship attends a chorister school in a cathedral town. When his voice changes and his term at the school expires, he rejoins the family in Bexley where there is no outlet for his talent. Lance laboriously acquires skill on the violin, and with his excellent voice, there is double incentive for him to pursue a musical career.

During a visit home Edgar tempts his brother to do just this, but Lance will not accept his brother's offer of patronage in London. Reluctantly but firmly Lance refuses the offer;. and Edgar who knows no self denial cannot understand why.

> "Come, have it out, Lance, you think me a corrupter of your artless youth."
>
> "No!"
>
> "Come, out with it. What has turned you?"
>
> The answer came at last in his low clear voice, speaking more into the fire than to Edgar, the eyes still fixed and far away--"And here we offer and present unto Thee ourselves, our souls and bodies to be a reasonable, holy, and lively sacrifice."
>
> "What do you mean? What's that?" said Edgar, half startled, half angry. (Pillars, II, 101)

The words which Edgar does not recognize come from the Communion Service. Lance sees that his duty to his family requires him to stay in Bexley and help Felix in the business, in which he has no interest, but which supports the family. Lance also recognizes that he must sacrifice all possibility of a musical career. In doing so Lance accepts the burden of Christian duty which Edgar rejected. Both courses of action have a sequel and we shall see that Lance's burden brings to him a blessing, whereas

Edgar's rejection of one burden brings an even greater for him to bear.

We have noted that Alda Mary lives in London with the wealthy Underwood cousins and that it is Wilmet and Cherry who are the female pillars of the family. The sisters have very different roles to play. Wilmet plans the meals, supervises laundering, cooking, cleaning and in general the practical details of the family life. Thus the family associates the "blight of penury" (Pillars, II, 150) with Wilmet who has little humour or lightheartedness as the result of her burdens. Moreover Wilmet also has a teaching job which means that all her time is spent either at school or at household tasks.

Cherry cannot take care of such duties at first because she is the invalid of the family. Cherry has a role similar to that of Margaret May. Because she is immobile the family members come to her. The children of the household, and Felix, turn to Cherry and not to Wilmet when they have problems or difficulties and also when they wish to share fun and friends. Cherry is the gentle, loving and compassionate sister, and it is particularly to Cherry that Felix turns for companionship and understanding. "She had seemed so set apart from marriage, so peculiarly dependent on him, that it had been to her that he turned with a sort of certainty as his companion in the life of self-sacrifice that he knew to lie before him." (Pillars, II, 150) Thus Cherry's major importance to the family and to the novel is as "wife" to Felix.

Cherry and Felix grow in their devotion to each other. Their "union" might have been at risk if one had

married. Felix of course cannot think of marrying while his brothers and sisters are young. Yet during the course of the novel Felix grows attached to a schoolteacher and friend of Wilmet, Alice Knevett. But Alice proves herself unworthy of Felix's affection. She feels superior to the impoverished Underwoods and also flirts indiscriminately with both Felix and Edgar. Felix never speaks of his attachment but Cherry senses it and comforts her brother.

Cherry has a definite opportunity to marry. Her wealthy and talented suitor lives in London and has become acquainted with Cherry during her visits to the London cousins. When Mr. Grinstead proposes to her, Felix feels dread at the idea of Cherry's marriage for "to lose Cherry from his hearth would quench its most cherished spark." (Pillars, II, 150) However Cherry does not love Mr. Grinstead and she refuses his offer. Thereafter Felix and Cherry are even more like husband and wife in their attentions to each other.

Cherry plays another important role in the novel. Besides being Felix's "wife" she demonstrates a successful combination of duty and talent in contrast to Edgar, who abandoned duty and Lance, who sacrificed talent. Cherry puts her talent second to her home duties but even so she wins artistic success. Friends and relatives aid Cherry with their encouragement and she succeeds in having pictures exhibited in the Royal Academy. Thus Cherry achieves the introduction to London society and the artistic world which Edgar sought but could not win. Nor does her success interfere with her home duties even when they multiply. By the time Wilmet eventually marries, Cherry

is able to take over all the household tasks. Two things aid her with the rearrangement of responsibilities. First she bravely seeks to have her diseased foot amputated so that she is more mobile, and secondly so few are left to be cared for that the burden is not beyond her strength.

Felix, of course, always bears the greatest burden. Even before his father's death, Felix takes on financial responsibility for the family. The local bookseller and weekly paper publisher, Mr. Froggatt, offers Felix a job at a guinea a week.

> "He said he wished I was not a gentleman's son, for if I had not been so I should have suited him exactly, and should be worth a guinea a week even now. And, Father do not you really think I had better take it."
>
> "You, Felix!" Mr. Underwood was exceedingly startled for the moment.
>
> "You see," said Felix rather grimly, leaning his head on the mantleshelf, and looking into the fire, "any other way I can only be an expense for years upon years, even if I did get a scholarship."
>
> His face was crimson, and his teeth set. (Pillars, I, 34-5)

Not only does Felix give up the chance of a better career, but he also gives up the right to good society. As his father remarks, "a little bookseller in a country town is a mere tradesman," and that with time "it will be more and more forgotten who you were." (Pillars, I, 36) Mr. Underwood makes it clear to Felix that his sacrifice will force him to depend only upon himself and his family.

Felix's struggle is largely confined to social and economic difficulties. He does not undergo any great development of character because his character is wholly formed at the start of the novel, and as we have seen, he

accepts his burdens from the very beginning of the family's time of trial. This is not to say that Felix plays a minor role in the novel. On the contrary, he is the ever present guide and supporter for all his siblings. Felix does experience some personal trials. One such trial is his unspoken attachment for Alice Knevett. However, in general Felix makes his cross a crutch by working for and devoting himself to his family. If Felix cannot have a life and family of his own, he has a wife in Cherry and a family in his siblings. And for the most part those whose lives he watches over develop satisfactorily so that he makes the burden a blessing for himself and for his family.

Then after nearly fifteen years of toil Miss Yonge rewards Felix with the inheritance of the Underwood ancestral home, Vale Leston. Felix knew that he was the heir of Vale Leston but he did not allow the future prospect to influence his impoverished existence. When he inherits the moderately endowed property, he refuses to change his attitude toward life, for Felix is always aware of the Christian burden. With the pleasures of the inheritance Felix also accepts its responsibilities. As soon as he is able to he carries out many improvements in the church and village.

In order to focus on Felix's activities, Miss Yonge transfers the setting of the novel from Bexley to Vale Leston. The day Felix formally takes possession makes a festive occasion for the family.

> At last, upon the stone steps stood Felix, with Cherry on his arm, Theodore in his hand, nine altogether out of his twelve brothers and sisters round him, on this

> the threshold of the home of his fore-fathers. There he stood, bare-headed moist-eyed, thanks to heaven swelling in his heart, thanks to man fluttering on his lips, as he heard the fresh shout of welcome, and the old men's "There he is! God bless him!"
>
> "Well may they say so!" whispered John Herewood to his wife /Wilmet/. "Here, at twenty-nine, he stands a stainless knight, with a stainless shield, as though he had not had to fight his way, and bear up all these around him!" (Pillars, II, 249)

The idea which John Herewood suggests, that Felix is a stainless knight, is an important one.[15] Miss Yonge would have the reader believe that Felix kept his gentlemanliness throughout his struggle. Thus he fits with ease into the society of the Vale Leston neighbourhood and, incidentally, keeps up the newspaper business, which he now partially owns. The society around Vale Leson "felt they had got a sensible, honourable, practical man among them, and accepted him as a fellow-worker for the welfare of their county. If he did sell books elsewhere, that was nothing to them; they felt he was a gentleman, and that was all they wanted." (Pillars, II, 281)

By the time Felix comes into his inheritance most of the children have passed from adolescence into adulthood and the end of the chronicle is at hand. However Miss Yonge did not let it end simply or quickly. The beginning of the end occurs just over half-way through the second volume and two-and-a-half years are to elapse

[15] we have already noted, in Chapter IV, page 105, that Miss Yonge was very interested in the idea of knighthood.

before the final deathbed scene.

The scene marking the transition begins peacefully enough as several of the Underwoods enjoy a pleasure boat excursion:

> "Such tranquil rest, amid such perfect peace and loveliness, without one discordant element, is one of the choicest boons of life." /said Felix to the others in the boat/
>
> Lance swallowed a sigh; and Cherry answered, "The very movements and sounds are all peace, though full of life."
>
> For a gold-billed moorhen was swimming among its little ones at the margin of the reeds at the bend of the river, and a sapphire kingfisher darted across the arch.
>
> "Halcyon days," said Felix.
>
> "Oh no! Halcyon days precede storms."
>
> "Maybe they give strength for them. Times like these are surely foretastes of perfect bliss."
>
> "How does that prepare for storms?"
>
> "Not only by calming nerves and spirits, but by giving some experience of the joy beyond--ay, and sense of love and confidence in Him who has made all so exquisite for our delight."
>
> It seemed to come from his heart, drawn forth by the grateful enjoyment of that sweet whitsun hour. (Pillars, II, 374-5)

Immediately thereafter another pleasure boat hits their craft, both overturn and although Felix finds and drags his youngest brother to the land's edge, Theodore is drowned. In the attempted rescue, moreover, Felix so hurts himself internally that he never recovers. The family grieve for their helpless brother and Felix particularly mourns the child who among all his brothers and sisters, had been especially dependent upon him. Theodore's dependence is in fact an example of his father's statement that a cross would become a crutch, for Felix says of the dead child, "I only know now what an incentive

his dependence was, and how this loosens me from the world." (Pillars, II, 401)

The loosening, begun with Theodore's death and necessitated by the serious injury, comes gradually, however, For Miss Yonge indulged her hero and gave him ample time to settle the family's affairs. Felix remarks, "It is curious how everything in my life seems drawing to a point, so that somehow I feel as if I were permitted to bind up my sheaves." (Pillars, II, 454) One uncertainty settled for Felix is the fate of his brother Edgar. After failing as an artist and contracting an unsuccessful marriage which the family hears of only by chance, there is no news of Edgar for a very long time. When news does come it is of Edgar's death in America. He dies with two terrible burdens on his soul, the murder of Alice Knevett's husband in a duel, and divorce from his wife, the mother of his son Gerald. He did not have any lasting success in life and his clerical brother Clement remarks "The real key lies in those words /of the Communion Service/ that haunted poor Edgar. The sacrifice must be to One or to the other--the Rood, or the heavier weight." (Pillars, II, 426)

Lance too has had a heavy burden. But the sacrifice he makes has as one reward his success at the family business. The sacrifice and burden also bring a blessing. Lance falls in love with and marries the now grown up Gertrude May from The Daisy Chain. Of the three brothers Edgar, Lance and Felix, only Edgar failed to take up his Christian burdens. In consequence what befell him was heavier than the burden he relinquished. Through these

characters especially there is ever present in the novel the idea of individual responsibility, and the burden which must be borne in any life.

As the chronicle crawls to a close Felix also experiences the blessing of a task well done. Miss Yonge has rewarded Felix materially and socially with the inheritance of Vale Leston, and Felix has thoroughly deserved the love and devotion of his brothers and sisters. Miss Yonge therefore contrived a fitting demonstration of Felix's successful achievements.

The Underwood family gathers at Vale Leston for the wedding of the youngest child, Stella. She is the last of Felix's responsibilities and thus the marriage marks the final binding up of his sheaves. All the siblings he has cared for gather at the ancestral home for the festive occasion. Only a few know that Felix's health has deteriorated greatly and as it happens, he collapses immediately after the ceremony. The festive occasion becomes funereal.

In the ensuing demonstration of love and gratitude, each sibling weeps and wails at great length in order to do justice to Felix's heroic stature. It is a blessing for Felix that all of them love him so. The great sorrow which his death causes attests to the successful and noble way he has carried his Christian burden. Wilmet and Cherry, in particular suffer greatly. Wilmet even loses her unborn child and Cherry's grief can be assuaged only by the presence of Edgar's young son. In fact Felix foresaw that the young Gerald would comfort Cherry. As part of the binding up of his sheaves he recognized that

Gerald would be the "object" needed to comfort Cherry, "making me far happier about her." (Pillars, II, 454)

The lives of the pillars show not only how burdens can become blessings if they are accepted, but also that burdens or duties in domestic life must be accepted and carried out in order to accomplish a successful domestic life. The lesson in behaviour in this chronicle is shown by means of the theme which, in its practical application and especially in the characterization of Felix, is very much like that of Scenes and Characters, which is that "the simple endeavour to fulfill each immediate claim of duty may lead to the highest acts of self-devotion. . . ."[16] Felix marks the pinnacle of success in the achievement of this ideal and as we shall see in the two remaining chronicles Miss Yonge did not again create a character with so great a trial or so great a success.

## V

## The Two Sides of the Shield and Magnum Bonum; or, Mother Carey's Brood

After The Pillars of the House Miss Yonge never again chronicled so desperate a situation. The last two chronicles, Magnum Bonum (1879) and The Two Sides of the Shield (1885), as has been mentioned, are both shorter and less fully developed than either The Pillars of the House or The Daisy Chain.

[16] C. M. Yonge, Scenes and Characters, p. vi.

Magnum Bonum; or, Mother Carey's Brood retains, by and large, the chronicle characteristics. The Brownlow family consists of six children all of whom experience adolescence. They suffer the loss of their father, a doctor, rather than their mother, but also lose their grandmother who had been the real mistress of the home. However, it is not only the development of the six children but also that of their youthful and inexperienced mother which engages our attention.

The adolescents, whose struggles we witness, do not encounter problems of the same nature as those which confronted the earlier chronicle families, nor does Miss Yonge treat them with the same seriousness or intensity. One reason for this was that by retaining the Brownlow mother rather than the father, Miss Yonge left the day to day management of household affairs in the hands of an adult. Thus the children are not burdened with extra and challenging household duties and responsibilities. A second reason why the adolescents do not encounter serious domestic problems is that Miss Yonge portrayed a late rather than a mid-victorian setting, as before. In the contemporary world attention was no longer so completely rivetted on the home. Therefore many of the "home events large and small" which had previously occupied her characters no longer had a place. Above all there was no longer the intense concern with domestic duty and obedience, which had characterized both the mid-victorian period and Miss Yonge's earlier work. Instead the young people in Magnum Bonum look outwards and are concerned with such things as their careers and their intellectual development.

The theme, although it supplies the book's title, is of relatively minor importance. It is concerned with responsibility, and particularly with the qualifications of those who might be entrusted with a great good. At the time of his death Dr. Brownlow had been working on a medical discovery to which he and his wife referred secretly as his "magnum bonum." Just before he dies he asks his wife, Carey, to promise to keep his idea a secret until one of their sons is able to continue the research.

> Spellbound, almost mesmerised by his will, Caroline pronounced--"I promise to keep the magnum bonum a secret till the boys are grown up, and then only to confide it to the one that seems fittest, when he has taken his degree, and is a good, religious, wise, able man, with brains and balance, fit to be trusted to work out and apply such an invention, and not make it serve his own advancement, but be a real good and blessing to all."[17]

Thus our attention is directed to each son's development in order to discover which one will fulfill the conditions of the promise. There is also a complication because Janet, the eldest child, hears of the discovery by accident and tries to win the magnum bonum. Unlike previous chronicles therefore the theme concerns the outcome of the adolescents' development rather than the illumination of that development as it occurs.

Unfortunately the conditions of the theme are highly improbable. We are asked to believe that the wife of a doctor, a man who had dedicated his life to helping others, voluntarily keeps secret for ten years or more a discovery which she believes will benefit mankind. Furthermore, the reason given for keeping the world ignorant for so long

[17] C. M. Yonge, Magnum Bonum, p. 32.

a time is that to work on the idea may be dangerous. We are also asked to believe that Janet, who studies medicine with great dedication in order to work on her father's discovery, is unfit to take up the work solely on the grounds of her sex. Thus Charlotte Yonge resolutely holds on to a mid-victorian idea, demonstrating her basic lack of sympathy both with the period and with her characters. Indeed the theme is allowed to fade away early in the novel, to make only infrequent appearances. The way in which the novel drifts away from the theme is such that we are led to suspect that the real but concealed theme is a criticism of the modern way of doing things, and in this it is quite unlike the previous chronicles. This suspicion is confirmed by considering the development of the characters.

The domestic setting of the novel is not typical of a family chronicle because the Brownlow family moves from home to home and even from England to travel in Europe. Indeed the story depends upon the changing scene and constant introduction of characters for its development. Neither are the developments of the children similar to those of adolescents in the earlier chronicles. Janet, for instance, becomes a lady doctor despite her mother's disapproval. In doing so she is of course disobedient, but her development is almost entirely divorced from any consideration of duty or obedience. Janet accepts no responsibility for her younger brothers and sisters. She does not teach them nor care for them. Furthermore Janet comes and goes as she pleases, especially

during a period when the family is very wealthy, and she even resents her mother's occasional attempts to control her.

Janet's modern development meets with no reward. She marries a German doctor who deserts her while they are in America; she has a child who dies shortly after her husband's desertion and finally she herself dies in an attempt to help the victims of an epidemic. Just before her death Janet and her mother are reconciled, but such a life and death are severe punishment, even for choosing so disobedient and so modern a course in life.

Miss Yonge also punishes the Brownlow sons who develop in a modern way. Allen, the eldest, goes to Eton and then Christchurch but because he never has to shoulder a burden he becomes a weak-willed and spineless adult. At the very end of the novel there is a minor religious awakening in Allen but until this happens he accepts neither duty nor responsibility in either his home or his church.

The next son, Robert or Bobus, disobeys his mother by studying science to the exclusion of Latin, and also by disregarding his church observances. Bobus even tries to marry his first cousin knowing that his mother opposes the match. In fact Bobus, like Janet, acts without any consideration for home or church duties and as the result of such behaviour, Bobus temporarily loses his faith. Like Janet, Bobus ends up in America where Miss Yonge leaves him recovering both his faith and his health after a severe fever, which we suspect was meant to punish him for his transgressions.

John, known as Jock, is the only son whose development is in any way satisfactory, although he does not have to shoulder any burdens nor accept any duties. Jock experiences some difficulties in his development, however. Initially he chooses the wrong profession and when he gives up the Guards, he loses the love of his lady. Of all her children Jock reminds Mother Carey most of her husband and therefore it is not surprising that he eventually becomes a doctor and then receives the magnum bonum. The long awaited disclosure, however, becomes an anti-climax because Jock soon realizes that another doctor has been working on the same theory.

Of the four elder children, then, only Jock forms a satisfactory character. The two youngest, Armine and Barbara, are neither very good nor very bad. Armine is a sickly child and Mother Carey lavishes much care on him. He therefore has no need to exert himself to obedience or to duty. Indeed there are no circumstances which call on him to do so. Eventually Armine decides to become a clergyman but Miss Yonge is somewhat ambiguous about his success. His health breaks down. Barbara, Armine's special sibling, remains the baby of the household. When nearly grown she takes courses at the university and has to write papers for her professor but otherwise she exhibits few modern characteristics. However, neither does she exhibit many old fashioned characteristics. Even though Barbara remains at home as a companion to her mother she has no occasion to demonstrate to any great degree either duty or obedience.

None of the Brownlows experiences the kind of development which gave to Ethel May and Felix Underwood, for example, heroic proportions. The reason is manifestly the lack of sympathy which Miss Yonge felt for the adolescent generation of the late 1870's. Her notions of duty and obedience had little relevance for the contemporary adolescents she depicted. She had, therefore, no moral framework for the multitude of daily incidents or for the discussions and evaluations of character which comprise the earlier chronicles. Furthermore by retaining the mother of the family rather than the father, Miss Yonge took away from her adolescent characters the necessity for maintaining the family establishment, a necessity which had brought about the development of domestic virtues in the earlier chronicles. The retention of the mother rather than the father might have meant the retention of the old virtues if Mother Carey had strong domestic and religious principles. But she, like her children, at the start of the chronicle anyway, is weak in these areas and although she develops almost in the manner of an adolescent, she herself sets no standard for her children.

Miss Yonge did try to keep abreast of the changes in society in Magnum Bonum, even though she did not approve of them. However, in her last family chronicle, The Two Sides of the Shield (1885), she acknowledges the existence of two different points of view, and openly declares herself in sympathy with the older generation. In this last chronicle Miss Yonge returned to the family which had

peopled her first chronicle, the Mohuns. In her imagination she had not lost track of these characters during the nearly forty years which separatesthe publication dates of the first and last chronicles. In The Two Sides Miss Yonge takes up the life of Lilias, now Lady Merrifield, and her own family of ten children.

This last chronicle barely qualifies as such. Lilias does have a large family of ten children but two girls, the eldest children, are in India with their father during the entire story and most of her sons attend boarding school. The removal of a parent is accomplished by the exigencies of military duty instead of by the calamity of death. Even with so large a family which includes several adolescent members, there is little development of character during the year in the life of the family which Miss Yonge records. For Lilias has been so good a mother, using old fashioned ideas of course, that her children, especially her daughters Mysie and Gillian, are already both dutiful and obedient.

The theme of the novel although prominent and better suited to a domestic setting than is a medical discovery, does not focus so much on an aspect of adolescent development as it does on a method of adolescent and childhood education. The theme again is in the title. Dolores Mohun, the only child of Maurice Mohun and niece of Lilias Merrifield joins the Merrifield household when her father goes to New Zealand for a scientific expedition. Unlike Lilias' children, Dolores has been brought up by the modern system of education. Thus the theme is a presentation of contrasting attitudes towards education, symbolised by the

two sides of the shield, and clearly represented by Dolores Mohun on the one hand and Lilias Merrifield and her children on the other.

Dolores is heavily outnumbered from the outset yet Miss Yonge is fair to her and it should be noted that the narrator writes from Dolores' point of view. Dolores is predisposed to dislike the Merrifields. Her own mother, who is dead, did not like the Mohun family and her father has not kept in close touch with his siblings. So before she even arrives Dolores has judged her aunt to be old-fashioned. She relates to a friend, "it is very pokey and slow down ther, and they are always after flannel petticoats and soup kitchens, and all the old fads that are exploded."[18]

Although stigmatized as "pokey and slow" Lilias runs her household under the old system, which she herself had grown up in, and which "made education depend more on the family than on the governess. . . ." (Shield, 22) The family education which Lilias supervises consists of Bible reading or other religious teaching every day, the study of such academic subjects as history and attention to plain old fashioned skills such as needlework.

It is just such an emphasis to which Dolores objects. Dolores is indignant when asked to do "actual plain needlework" (Shield, 45) and as far as academic subjects are concerned, Dolores "thought it foolish to study

[18] C. M. Yonge, The Two Sides of the Shield (London: Macmillan and Co., 1889), p. 11. All quotations from this novel in this chapter will be followed by Shield and a page number in parenthesis.

anything that did not tell in a Cambridge examination," (Shield, 45) and therefore she knows nothing about ancient history. There is perhaps an excuse for ignorance in this area but the Mohuns believe that there is no excuse for ignorance of the Bible. Lilias' daughter Gillian relates to her mother with horror that Dolores knows nothing of the Bible stories because "she said that it was not the present system to perplex children with the myths of ancient Jewish history." (Shield, 95) In fact, the ancient myths and other religious topics taken up in the schoolroom every day, Dolores believes to be "old-fashioned" and "Just like a charity school. . . ." (Shield, 43)

Dolores is an unhappy child whose family life was lonely and whose expectations of the Merrifields lead her to mistake their good intentions for bad. Yet the most important difference between Dolores and the Merrifield children, Mysie and Gillian in particular, is her lack of moral fibre. For the chronicle has, in addition to its home events large and small, a quite uncharacteristic suspense story which involves Dolores with a wicked step-uncle and his forgery of a cheque. Dolores gets herself into difficulty because she, unlike the Merrifield girls, acts independently, even slyly, and lies in order to protect herself. In short, Dolores is neither dutiful nor obedient to her Aunt Lilias and the implied cause is her lack of old-fashioned education.

Miss Yonge's sympathies are obviously with Lilias but they are not entirely against Dolores whom she pictures as a sad victim of the modern system. Miss Yonge tried

to maintain a balanced outlook. She shows in Lilias an acute awareness of the shortcomings of both generations. The great difference in the two systems Lilias believes to be in the part which parents take in the education of their children. When she was young "people thought it their own business to bring up their children themselves, and let the actual technical teaching depend upon opportunities, whereas now they get them taught, but let the bringing up take its chance." (Shield, 99) Thus Lilias concludes that although modern girls know German and other subjects there is "not over-knowledge but want of knowledge--want of general culture." (Shield, 100) On the other hand Lilias is aware of the shortcomings of the system by which she was brought up which, she admits, "Was rather passing away even then." (Shield, 99) It was a narrow system and for one thing admitted no study of science. Maurice, Dolores' father, was a victim of the old idea of education. Lilias explains this to her daughter.

> 'Maurice was always much the cleverest of us all, and with a very strong mechanical and scientific turn, so that I now think it might have been better to let him follow his bent. But when we were young there was a good deal of mistrust of anything outside the beaten tracks of gentlemanlike professions, and my dear old father did not like what he heard of the course for those lines." (Shield, 16)

Lilias prefers the old as the basis for her own children's education only as the better of two imperfect courses. In comparison of the products of old and new systems, however, Lilias seems to have chosen wisely. Her daughters are both dutiful and obedient and are, moreover, honest, a quality which Dolores lacks.

Although Dolores comes to appreciate her aunt and her cousins, Miss Yonge removes her from the Merrifield family at the close of the novel. Maurice Mohun returns to England and decides to take his daughter back with him to New Zealand. Perhaps the gap between Dolores and her cousins was too great to bridge. The lie which Dolores told and the lack of religious training were indeed a very great gulf.

# C H A P T E R  VII

## THE LAST NOVELS

### i

### Introduction

In the discussions of The Three Brides, Magnum Bonum and The Two Sides of the Shield we noted the beginning of a decline in Charlotte Yonge's literary powers. We noted especially in all three novels that Miss Yonge was losing sympathy with the younger generation. For example, in The Two Sides of the Shield, the conflict of manners and virtues between Lilias Merrifield and Dolores Mohun is such that the middle-aged Lilias is depicted as the champion and representative of the "better" mid-Victorian notions and the adolescent Dolores as the defender of the "doubtful" modern ideas. In all three novels it is most noticeable that the notions of duty and obedience, by which Miss Yonge judges behaviour, particularly that of children and women, are no longer as relevant to domestic society as once they had been. The gradual out-dating and the increasing inadequacy of these notions and of the religious authority on which they were based are the key factors in the decline of Miss Yonge's literary powers. These factors are, in turn, a function of the changing Victorian society which as we shall see robbed Miss Yonge of her authority in domestic and religious situations and

therefore of her power to create a good domestic fiction.

By the 1880's a great number of political, economic and religious, as well as social changes had occurred in the fabric of Victorian society and there were, of course, more changes in the last two decades of the century. The social hierarchy which Charlotte Yonge depicts with so much certainty in the fifties and sixties greatly changed by the eighties. The change was in part brought about by the institution of the very schools and other philanthropic pursuits which she reflects in her novels. Yet when, for example, conditions for the lower classes are greatly improved, Miss Yonge is not comfortable in the new atmosphere.

The family circle, too, changed in its character. The roles of women were different both in the home and in society. Teaching in village schools gave way to a greater variety of activities, even careers, in which a woman could participate. Adolescents also began to enjoy more independence and freedom of choice. Both boys and girls attended school and came under influences far different from those exerted in the home environment of their parents' generation.

Nor was the standard for religious beliefs and religious observances, which Charlotte Yonge knew as a child and young woman, any longer applicable. The younger generation faced different problems, evolved different attitudes towards the church and demanded from it different standards and ideals. All these changes were quite alien to Charlotte Yonge even though she was aware of them and of their widespread acceptance. As she grew older she

admitted that her viewpoint had changed and the consequent change that can be most clearly noted in her fiction is that she grew to prefer her middle-aged rather than her adolescent characters.

> The young write in full sympathy with as well as for, the young, they have a pensive satisfaction in feeling and depicting the full pathos of a tragedy, and on the other hand they delight in their own mirth, and fully share it with the beings of their imagination, or they work out great questions with the unhesitating decision of their youth.
>
> But those who write in elder years look on at their young people, not with inner sympathy but from the outside. Their affections and comprehension are with the fathers, mothers, and aunts, they dread, rather than seek, piteous scenes, and they have learnt that there are two sides to a question, that there are many stages in human life, and that the success or failure of early enthusiasm leaves a good deal more yet to come.[1]

It is important to note that Charlotte Yonge was fully aware of the changes that had taken place in society. Both her awareness of the changes and her adherence to the mid-Victorian standard left Miss Yonge in a weakened position as far as her creative powers were concerned, for the changes in society's attitude towards class, family and especially religion caused Miss Yonge two large literary problems. First, she no longer had the authority of established practice and widely held beliefs on which to base her moralizing on the virtues of duty and obedience. Second, without such a base there could be no structure within which to depict and judge behaviour or within which to build incidents and therefore create story and character development.

[1] C. M. Yonge, The Long Vacation (London: Macmillan and Co. Ltd., 1901), p. vi.

Her authority had come from religion and therefore the relative absence of religion in the last novels is of great significance. The gradual disappearance of this great topic can be noted as early as 1876 in The Three Brides in which it is only the particulars of religious observance which receive attention and only because the husband of one bride is a rector. There is no deep concern for the role of religion in the parish and religion is a motivating factor in the life of only one bride, the one who is not an Anglican. In Magnum Bonum (1879) the subject of religion is basically just a convenient means for criticising the conduct of the Brownlow family. Again it is not a motivating factor in their lives. Even though the majority of the characters in this family chronicle are adolescents there is no real concern for confirmation or any of the other aspects of religious life which were important to the adolescent characters in the earlier chronicles.

There is even less concern with religion and its influence on daily life in The Two Sides of the Shield (1885). It is true that Gillian Merrifield exposes Dolores Mohun's ignorance of the Bible. Yet the Merrifield children do not teach Sunday school, visit in the parish, discuss religious topics, nor take inspiration from missionaries. It is a fact that this great source of inspiration for incident and character development gradually disappears from her domestic novels, and by the eighties the lack of religion in the novels serves to separate the great novels of Miss Yonge's prime from those of her waning years.

When we turn to the last three domestic novels, Beechcroft at Rockstone (1888), The Long Vacation (1895), and Modern Broods (1900), we see an even greater shift away from religion as the basis for personal behaviour. In these last novels the motivating factor which seems to take the place of religion in the lives of the characters is a conflict of manners and ideals between members of the adolescent or younger generation and members of the adult or middle-aged generation. Miss Yonge leaves us in no doubt as to where her sympathies lie and demonstrates a clear preference for her middle-aged characters and the old church ordained standards.

It is not surprising that with religion and the notions of duty and obedience noticeably diminished the novels are shorter, that they contain far less domestic detail and that even the distinctions between right and wrong behaviour are blurred and indistinct. The novels are far below her best work and we are forced to speculate as to why Miss Yonge continued to write domestic stories until the end of her life, especially when we consider the fact that she was aware that "continuations are proverbially failures."[2] The last domestic novels are "continuations" because they are, at least in part, continuations of the lives of the chronicled families.

Part of the answer may simply be that she had written for so many years that the activity had become too engrained a habit to be broken. Or, it may be that the interest of her readers in the lives of their favourite characters

[2] Yonge, The Long Vacation, p. v.

encouraged her to continue to chronicle their lives. Charlotte Yonge gives us another reason for her continuations when she says that

> it is perhaps a consequence of the writer's realization of characters that some seem as if they could not be parted with, and must be carried on in the mind, and not only have their after-fates described, but their mind and opinions under the modifications of advancing years and altered circumstances.[3]

It is a consideration which was perhaps prompted by her own "advancing years" and the "altered circumstances" of life around her.

For whatever reason, Miss Yonge did continue to write and the novels of domestic middle-class life which she wrote in the last two decades of her life do, in fact, take up the lives of characters with whom she could not part. Like The Two Sides of the Shield, Beechcroft at Rockstone continues the story of Lilias Merrifield, her children and several of her siblings. The Long Vacation takes up the lives of old and young members not only of the Mohuns and Merrifields but also of various Underwoods from The Pillars of the House. Modern Broods, the last domestic novel, continues to unfold the lives of characters in both Mohun-Merrifield and Underwood families.

Although the novels show a decline in Miss Yonge's fictional powers, they merit analysis because they demonstrate the changes in her attitudes, both her increased tolerance and compassion in some cases and her growing rigidity and ageing outlook in most others. Also since

[3] The Long Vacation, p. v.

our investigation began with an analysis of the novels of her youth, it is perhaps fitting that we close with an analysis of the novels of her old age and thus note the changes both in society and in Miss Yonge's outlook which occurred in her fifty years of writing. Indeed as she was a continuing observer of contemporary life her later novels deserve attention in and of themselves because of the picture of society that they paint.

Her technique, although lacking strength and detail, is still deployed in the effort to illustrate a kind of lesson or belief in an old-fashioned notion, by showing deviation from the right path, criticism of improper behaviour and praise for characters who try to uphold the old standards. But as her mid-Victorian standards are sadly out of date and as her sympathy is with her middle-aged characters, it is scarcely surprising that her technique is no longer effective and that, in fact, in the last two novels it fails altogether.

## ii

## Beechcroft at Rockstone

Lady Merrifield receives a telegram announcing an accident in India. She persuades herself that she must join her injured husband and splits her children into groups according to the generosity of her brothers' and sisters' offers of hospitality. After the splitting up of the family, which takes place outside of Rockstone, Beechcroft at Rockstone (1888) at first concerns the everyday routine of Gillian, Valetta and Fergus Merrifield

at "Beechcroft," the home of their Aunts Jane and Ada. Valetta, after initial rebellion, settles into classes at the day school without any mishap. Fergus even benefits from the change. His enthusiasm is for scientific subjects and he finds a sympathetic friend in his Aunt Jane. Gillian, on the other hand, assumes a more independent attitude than the much younger Fergus and Valetta. She attends only a few classes at the local High School despite her Aunt Jane's good advice to her to attend full-time. But Gillian, who is preparing for the Cambridge examinations, "prefers to study on her own initiative."[4] Furthermore her Aunt Jane's inquisitive nature rubs against her own personality and Gillian develops a spirit of opposition quite out of keeping with the tenets of duty and obedience.

This opposition between Gillian and Aunt Jane is the basis for much of the incident in the novel. If Gillian had not been put off by her Aunt's manner she might have confided to Jane Mohun as she always did to her mother and thus been saved from committing the errors which entangle her in a web of deceit. Her acts of indiscretion are not so very serious, however. They arise from her quite honourable desire to re-establish friendship with a family, the Whites, whose father had served under General Merrifield. The father of the White family has been dead

[4] C. M. Yonge, Beechcroft at Rockstone 2 vols. (London: Macmillan and Co., 1888), I, 46. Hereafter all quotations from this novel in this chapter will be followed by Rockstone, a volume and a page number in parenthesis.

some years and the "half-Greek" mother has fallen into poverty and decay. Aunt Ada, who generously takes Gillian to pay a call on them one afternoon, staggers away from the Whites' home, revolted by the fat, greasy mother. But Gillian insists on a friendship with the elder daughter, Kalliope, who works as a designer in the local pottery factory, even though Jane wishes her to wait for her mother's sanction.

Believing that her mother would not object to the renewed friendship Gillian secretly meets Kalliope every Sunday afternoon in the Beechcroft back garden. She reasons that since she has written to her mother about the meetings she is not disobedient to her Aunt Jane. But as we have seen in many of Charlotte Yonge's domestic novels, remiss behaviour, no matter how innocuous at first, exposes the conscience to greater temptations. Furthermore Gillian should have been aware that she was not fulfilling her duty to her aunt.

Kalliope's brother Alexis wishes to better himself by learning Greek and Gillian undertakes to tutor him in Kalliope's office which is conveniently located near her Aunt's home. Gillian reasons that the lessons do no harm but she is aware that if her Aunt were to know about them, she would undoubtedly forbid the practice. By not consulting Aunt Jane, Gillian gives the lessons a clandestine tone and to compound the situation Alexis White becomes more devoted to Gillian than to the Greek. This is one way in which the original lack of duty and obedience becomes compounded. To make matters worse, in gratitude to Gillian, Alexis assists the scientific Fergus to collect rock samples from the factory grounds. In so doing

Fergus unknowingly removes stones which mark a dangerous cliff and much later Lord Rotherwood almost comes to grief in a landslide.

These complications, brought on by her independent attitude, and the strain of the continuing deception, eventually tell on Gillian, especially because Kalliope, who is both dutiful and obedient to her revolting but dying mother, wishes Gillian to tell her Aunts about the Greek lessons. Gillian begins to feel dissatisfied both with herself and with the life she leads in Rockstone. What she needs is guidance towards a better frame of mind and better principles of behaviour.

At this critical time, when she is open to improvement, her sister in India marries Bernard Underwood and in consequence of this new family connection Gillian receives an invitation from the Underwoods to spend Christmas at Vale Leston. During the visit the atmosphere generated by this religious and moral family influences Gillian to a better frame of mind:

> the atmosphere of Vale Leston had deepened her spiritual life, and the sermons had touched her heart to the quick, and caused self-examination, which had revealed to her the secret of her dissatisfaction with herself. . . . (Rockstone, I, 255-6)

As a result Gillian tells her Aunt Jane about her independent and deceptive behaviour as soon as she returns to Rockstone. She feels more comfortable with her Aunts after the confession and in fact her erroneous behaviour is not very serious.

In her own home, Gillian had always been perfectly open and candid with her mother but the type of supervision

which Aunt Jane tried was in some way contrary to her expectations. Thus some of the blame for her behaviour can be laid to Jane, who, as Ada suggests, "did superintend a little too much at first. More than modern independence was prepared for. . . ." (Rockstone, I, 225)

If Gillian's errors are not too serious, neither is the lesson which she learns too important. In effect she learns to submit to her Aunt's opinions in matters of decorum. Gillian becomes liable to indecorous behaviour when she allows the clash of personalities between herself and her Aunt to influence her behaviour. This marks a great difference in behaviour between Gillian and her generation on the one hand, and Lilias and Jane and their generation on the other. The difference is in the virtue of obedience which for the older generation was "in the spirit as well as the letter." (Rockstone, II, 117) For Gillian obedience is not a principle of behaviour. Her mother observes that Gillian and her contemporaries "are all rather infected by the modern spirit, that criticises when it ought to submit to authorities." (Rockstone, II, 116).

One other way in which Gillian should have submitted to her Aunt Jane is in the matter of attendance at the High School. For Gillian's independent studies do not succeed and we can see her failure as a punishment for her lack of obedience: "the results of the Cambridge Examination showed . . . she had failed, and conscience carried her back to last autumn's disinclination to do just what Aunt Jane especially recommended." (Rockstone, II, 158)

Although Gillian does not learn of her failure in the Cambridge Examination till near the end of the novel, she learns her lesson in obedience approximately half way through Beechcroft at Rockstone. Evidently neither the extent of her erroneous behaviour nor the seriousness of the lesson were enough material for incident and character development for the full length of the novel. Perhaps in consequence of this the population of Rockstone swells about half-way through the novel with the addition of Lord and Lady Rotherwood, their daughter, Phyllis, and Mysie Merrifield, and then with the addition of the General and Lady Merrifield who rent a house and gather together their vast brood.

Another character to join the Rockstone population is the owner of the pottery factory in which Kalliope works, the very wealthy Mr. White, who is, as it happens, her dead father's cousin. With the addition of these characters, and especially Mr. White, the focus of the novel changes from Gillian and her naughtiness to other matters.

Perhaps the most important theme to be taken up in the second half of the novel is the subject of "levelling." It is a contemporary social issue which is dutifully recorded by the honest and observant author. When first mentioned the subject seems to be merely another area of disagreement between Gillian's and Jane's generations. Aunt Jane early in the novel asserts that "Good birth and an ancestry above shame are really a blessing, though it has come to be the fashion to sneer at them." (Rockstone, I, 120) As we might expect Gillian sees the social

situation in another light. She is not against good birth and breeding but she scorns "snobs" who are "Mere worshippers to any sort of handle to one's name." (Rock-stone, I, 120)

During this exchange of views between aunt and niece, Ada is prompted to exclaim "Gillian, Gillian, you are not going in for levelling." (Rockstone, I, 120) Ada's horror at Gillian's attitude is ironic in the light of later events, for, a short time after the addition of the Rotherwoods, Merrifields and Mr. White to the Rockstone scene, Ada seriously considers a proposal of marriage from Mr. White. The social implications of levelling, therefore, loom large in the Mohun family because, although Mr. White is wealthy, he has neither birth nor breeding.

While Ada considers the proposal the family considers the implications of such a marriage. "The sister, Lady Henry Grey, /Emily/ in her dowager seclusion at Brighton, contented herself with a general moan on the decadence of society, and the levelling up that made such an affair possible." (Rockstone, II, 210) Jane believes that it is not the decadence of society but the "titillation of vanity" (Rockstone, II, 205) which has made the affair possible. What Ada has in fact been offered are the personal advantages that go with enormous wealth.

So despite her earlier horror when Gillian seemed to advocate levelling, Ada's hesitations as to Mr. White's suitability are overcome, probably by his wealth and the prospect of future vain indulgances, and she accepts his offer. Certainly if Mr. White had been poor Ada never would have considered his proposal and it is hinted that

she expected her brothers and sisters to object more strongly than they did and perhaps thereby offer her an excuse for refusing the marriage after a period in which to enjoy the temptation. At her age, however, the family can hardly interfere with the wishes of the middle-aged sister, even though "they would have willingly endured the ridicule of a broken engagement to secure Adeline from the risks of a rough temper where gentlemanly instincts were not inbred." (Rockstone, II, 226) It is this lack of "gentlemanly instincts" which Miss Yonge evidently finds most disquieting about levelling.

The treatment of Mr. White's gentlemanliness is interesting because by the late years of the Victorian era, gentlemanliness did not depend entirely upon birth.[5] In London, for example, General Merrifield meets up with a former acquaintance, Captain Henderson, a Royal Wardour who was made into a gentleman by his profession. "They knew he was the son of a popular dentist, who had made his fortune, and had put his son into the army to make a gentleman of him. . . ." (Rockstone, II, 222) The result, Miss Yonge concludes, was a "very fair success." (Rockstone, II, 112) Neither Captain Henderson nor Mr. White were born into the ranks of gentlemen. Captain Henderson, however, is accepted as a gentleman by the Merrifields whereas Mr. White is not. The reason for the distinction we are to believe, is that the manners and the behaviour of the two men are quite different. Captain Henderson

[5] See G. Kitson Clark, The Making of Victorian England p. 253 and 255.

arouses no unfavourable impression whereas the General witnesses an episode in which Mr. White uses indiscrete ungentlemanly language in front of Kalliope White in the course of a heated conversation concerning possible fraud:

> "Did you think I meant you?" said Mr. White contemptuously. "No; I prefer a fool to a knave!"
>
> "Mr. white," interposed Sir Jasper, "whatever you may have to say to Richard White, consider his sister. (Rockstone, II, 142)

On such slender evidence Mr. White is kept from the ranks of gentlemen. As Jane complains to Lily, "he isn't a gentleman! I don't mean only his birth--and I know he is a good man really--but Jasper said he could feel he was not a gentleman by the way he fell on Richard White before his sister." (Rockstone, II, 202)

Perhaps Miss Yonge intends her readers to be a little shocked that Ada Mohun with her impeccable ancestry should accept a man who had no ancestry at all. Ada's marriage is one of the important signs of changing times in Beechcroft at Rockstone. The marriage between a Mohun and not-quite-a-gentleman could not have occurred in one of the earlier domestic novels. Charlotte Yonge lets us know her own preference for good families above "levelling" by having the marchioness, Lady Rotherwood, who advocates the older values, declare "she would not consent to let [her daughter] Lady Phyllis be a bridesmaid" at the wedding. (Rockstone, II, 227)

However the process of levelling was not so serious that Charlotte Yonge needed to punish her characters with an unhappy marriage. Ada presumably enjoys the villa in Italy and the status in Rockstone which her marriage affords

her. But there must be some retribution and so Miss Yonge suggests that between Mr. and Mrs. White there is "something lacking in companionship." (Rockstone, II, 262)

Thus Ada's marriage concludes the novel. Her marriage has little connection with Gillian's deceptions and subsequent failure at the Cambridge examination and yet the two stories are woven together by virtue of the fact that the characters in the two episodes are largely the same. However, the fact that the novel does combine two largely unrelated stories is evidence of a decline in Miss Yonge's literary ability. The novel has neither the unity nor the intensity of earlier novels. Evidence of less intensity is seen in the fact that Gillian learns a lesson in obedience of only minor proportions. Furthermore, the basis for virtuous behaviour, religion, is given no more than cursory treatment in the novel. Except for Gillian's transformation at Vale Leston, religion, its duties and its application to daily life, are completely omitted from consideration.

It is no wonder then that in both of the interlocking stories the episodes depend on external events which are generated by an ever growing number of characters. Nor is it surprising that both stories depend for their interest not on known principles of behaviour but on the differing attitudes of two generations. But perhaps the most telling change in this novel from the earlier domestic fictions is that the character who learns the lesson is not the heroine. Gillian is a major character to be sure, but she does not have the stature that arises from a detailed character development nor does she have the complete

sympathy of the authoress. Instead it is a middle-aged character and one who learns no lesson who is the heroine. In a letter to a friend Charlotte Yonge writes, "Gillian was very naughty, rather I think from want of knowledge of the world than anything else, besides spirit of opposition. I am glad you like Jane, somehow she had erected herself to me into the heroine."[6]

iii

## The Long Vacation

The theme of The Long Vacation (1895) again concerns the conflicting attitudes of two generations. The theme is more pronounced in this novel than in Beechcroft at Rockstone and perhaps the greater and more serious attention given to the contrast in ideals reflects the passage of some seven years between it and the earlier publication, years in which the foundations of Miss Yonge's beliefs became even more outdated than they had been before.

The conflict is between two of the main characters, Cherry Underwood from The Pillars of the House and her nephew Gerald Underwood. Cherry in this novel is the widow of Mr. Grinstead whom she married sometime after Felix' death. Gerald is the orphaned son of Edgar Underwood and the heir to the Underwood ancestral home, Vale Leston.

The widowed Cherry and her brother Clement Underwood, who is much enfeebled by a recent fever, repair to Rockstone for a summer's rest. Gerald, whom Cherry has brought up and who is on his long vacation from Oxford,

[6] Coleridge, Charlotte Mary Yonge, p. 326.

accompanies them. The usual Rockstone population is present; Sir Jasper and Lady Merrifield with some of their brood, Aunt Jane now living with her brother, Reginald Mohun, and Dolores Mohun. There are also occasional appearances by other old friends from the chronicles such as Lance Underwood and his wife Gertrude May.

Gerald Underwood is nearly twenty-one and certain questions concerning Vale Leston, which have arisen in his minority, will be settled by him when he comes into his inheritance. His ideas of what should be done to the estate conflict with Cherry's ideas and this conflict serves to distinguish the two generations sharply. Although the action of the novel wanders considerably, the underlying purpose is to put the younger generation, personified by Gerald, once and for all in its proper subservient place.

The Vale Leston problem concerns a company which wishes to build a clay factory near the Vale Leston village and river. Everyone agrees that a factory would change the character of the village. The question is whether the proposal means progress or whether it is better to keep the peaceful atmosphere which the village has always had. Gerald favours the work opportunity for his villagers even though the potential prosperity will mean a lessening of the influence of the Underwood family in the village itself. Cherry fears a lessening of the religious influence which the Underwoods have had for some time in Vale Leston.

In this and some other matters Gerald's views seem radical to Cherry. When asked to help with a bazaar being given in order to raise money to keep out the school board,

for example, Gerald replies, "I would help readily enough if it were free dinners, or anything to equalize the existence of the classes, instead of feeding the artificial wants of the one at the expense of the toil and wretchedness of the other."[7] Gerald, to the credit of Miss Yonge, speaks with the authentic voice of a radical against the very class structure which gives the Underwoods their prestige and influence particularly in Vale Leston.

Dolores Mohun, who is now quite grown up from her last appearance in The Two Sides of the Shield and who pursues scientific interests, sides with Gerald. She at first expected Gerald to be a pampered heir but the two are drawn together by the similarity of their views on several modern subjects. Instead of Sunday school teaching or other religious work, Dolores and Gerald both see slums as an area for improvement. Dolores declares that "if I went in for good works I would go to the bottom--down to the slums," and Gerald concurs, "Slums are one's chief interest." (Vacation, 128)

While a romance develops between them Gerald accidentally becomes involved with a disreputable storekeeper and her daughter. In one of Miss Yonge's most improbable plot developments Madame Smetterlng turns out to be Gerald's mother and Ludmilla, her daughter, his stepsister. The situation becomes even more improbable when Madame Smetterlng, even though she was properly divorced by Edgar, tries to blackmail Gerald and her weapon is his very legitimacy. Miss Yonge treats this delicate subject

[7] C. M. Yonge, The Long Vacation, p. 75. Hereafter all quotations from this novel in this chapter will be followed by Vacation and a page number in parenthesis.

from afar. The questions turn on the date of the death of Madam's first husband compared to the date of her marriage with Edgar, her second husband.

Clement and Cherry repair to Italy in order to discover the answer and Gerald returns to Oxford. Almost immediately, however, the story takes another turn. Dolores discovers that the poor Ludmilla is working in a circus. Madame Snetterlng forces her young daughter to perform difficult tricks on a horse as a money-making attraction. Gerald determines to rescue her. He and Dolores plan her escape from this odious life, and, once the escape is effected, Gerald takes his sister to America. In America while waiting to discover whether or not he is legitimate, Gerald works in order to support himself and his sister. Then the plot takes yet another highly improbable turn. The sister and brother accidentally discover their mother dying of an incurable disease and Ludmilla, although used so cruelly by her, lovingly tends her last days. So difficult is it for Gerald to support his mother and sister that he suffers a reawakening of his old spinal ailment, dating to his boyhood years before he arrived at Vale Leston, and in consequence he slowly dies. All his trouble and toil in a strange country, however, persuades Gerald that if he were home he would embrace Cherry's ethics and give up his own. He writes to Cherry, from his deathbed,

> One comfort for you is that if I ever do come home again to reign at Vale Leston, I shall have seen the outcome of various theories of last year, and proved what is the effect of having no class to raise a standard or look up to. (Vacation, 333)

Gerald dies in America and is buried by his father's side. Ludmilla fades from sight and Cherry hardly sheds a tear for the child she has raised, even though he turns out to have been legitimate after all. Instead of grief and despair, of which we have had enough by this time, the novel ends with the marriage of Ivinghoe Rotherwood, son of Lord Rotherwood originally of Scenes and Characters, to Franceska Vanderkist, daughter of Alda Mary Underwood.

Instead of the usual close association between theme and story development as in the earlier domestic novels, in The Long Vacation the two are separated. After the introduction of the theme of conflict, other incidents make up the story and hold the readers' interest and these are not directly related to the conflicting ideals of Cherry and her nephew. The question of legitimacy and the flight to America, furthermore, are so far removed from the initial theme that Gerald's transformation to Cherry's point of view comes as a surprise. It is true that he is abused by his American employer and his health consequently deteriorates but his observations and analyses of "various theories of last year" are not given, even in outline. Exactly why Gerald comes to favour a "class to raise a standard to look up to" is simply not explained. His changed attitude seems to be an attempt by the author-ess to revert to the theme when the story has clearly not been concerned with it.

By forcing this change in Gerald's attitude Miss Yonge seems to be attempting to teach a lesson in the novel. However for the first time the lesson is not concerned with the virtues of duty and obedience. These notions in fact

never arise concerning any of Gerald's actions towards Cherry. Instead the lesson is on the benefits of class distinction and, as such, the lesson has little force. Indeed, it is prejudice and preference for old ways rather than the power of religious authority which gives rise to the lesson.

It is worth noting that religion has only a very minor part in The Long Vacation, even though Clement Underwood is the vicar of St. Wulstan's Church in London. The lack of any explicit principle or authority to uphold Cherry's views and Miss Yonge's own belief in the benefits of class distinction are responsible for the pointless and rambling nature of this essentially poor novel.

There are many unsatisfactory and inadequate aspects of the novel. It is never explained why Gerald has, to begin with, attitudes so different from those of the person who has brought him up. We can wonder when and where he was exposed to such radical views. It is possible, of course, that they were so widespread by 1895 that Miss Yonge believed that she did not need to account for their origin. Again the romance between Gerald and Dolores is somewhat unusual because Dolores is not a favoured character. She was never absolved from telling a lie in The Two Sides of the Shield and she has a modern career as a lecturer in technology, an area not sanctioned by Miss Yonge. Perhaps the union develops out of Miss Yonge's unspoken dislike for both young adults.

The constantly shifting scene and the divergent developments in the story between Gerald's legitimacy and his plans for the future of Vale Leston are other examples

of the weakness of the novel. Miss Yonge was unable to sustain action and interest in one setting as she had done so successfully in previous novels and so she shifts scene, interlocks several stories, and constantly introduces new characters in order to keep up the illusion of progression and development. The incident of Ludmilla's dramatic rescue from the circus is a sad example of the decline of the authoresses powers.

In addition, Miss Yonge diverts much attention to her older characters, characters whom we remember well from previous novels. She does not re-establish their personalities which probably indicates that she was aware that she was writing only for a well-established audience and it seems likely that a reader who encounters Lilias, Cherry and Jane, for example, for the first time in this novel would not find them interesting. For readers who are acquainted with the family chronicles, however, there is a continued interest in the lives of these well-known characters.

Miss Yonge's powers of characterization and plot-making show a decline in this novel largely because her basis of authority is gone. There is a conversation between Lilias and Cherry which clearly indicates that in matters both large and small Charlotte Yonge no longer writes from a basis of authority and therefore lacks the certainty of her younger days.

Cherry and Lilias Merrifield meet casually but each is interested in the other's views because of the interest shown by Cherry's nephew for Lilias' niece. Both are middle-aged characters and both were brought up in the religious

mid-victorian atmosphere which marks the novels of the fifties and sixties. Lilias is perhaps more conservative in her approach than Cherry, who occasionally tries to justify some of the ideas of the younger generation. The two women touch on many topics in their conversation and in each case it is clear that their attitudes, and by implication those of Miss Yonge, are sadly old fashioned. It is this very fact, the passing of their standards and ideals, and their replacement with a new "set of notions" (Vacation, 130) which are not valuable to them, that the women discuss.

Lilias is vitally concerned in the matter of independence for women for she has a houseful of young daughters. Her concern is that "the laws of young ladyhood-- maidenliness-- are a good deal relaxed--" (Vacation, 130) and that the difficulty for a mother when supervising her daughters is "to know where the old-fashioned distaste is the motive, and where the real principle of modesty." (Vacation, 131) By noting the word "distaste" we are aware that Lilias' attitude toward the more "relaxed" code is unfavourable. In general both middle-aged women fail to sympathise with the prevalent attitude of independence for girls, the "spirit of independence that sends girls to hospitals or medical schools." (Vacation, 131)

There are two specific, although minor areas of activity mentioned in the conversation which have become decidedly old fashioned for the young but which were important to Lilias and not coincidentally to Charlotte Yonge. One of these is an interest in chivalry. Lilias

explains, and with a regretful tone that

> "History was delightful to me for the search for true knights. I had lists of them, drawings if possible, but I never could indoctrinate anybody with my affection. Either history is only a lesson, or they know a great deal too much, and will prove to you that the Cid was a ruffian and the Black Prince not much better."[8] (Vacation, 152)

Chivalry is a relatively unimportant matter, but the decline of the second enthusiasm, Sunday school teaching, much have touched Charlotte Yonge deeply. Lilias again acts as spokesman when she says of her own girlhood that "my ideal work was Sunday-schools," (Vacation, 151) whereas for her own daughters "all the excitement of the matter has gone off." (Vacation, 132) Miss Yonge was not devoid of understanding in the matter and so Cherry retorts with the most probable explanation that "an enthusiasm cannot be expected to last above a generation and perhaps a half." (Vacation, 132)

Touching on a more important subject, Lilias observes that once a young man went to Oxford and "got raised into a higher atmosphere, and came home with beautiful plans and hopes for the Church . . . but now the University seems just an ordeal for faith to go through." (Vacation, 155) The Tractarians were a powerful influence for only a short period. Even as early as 1856 in The Daisy Chain Norman May's faith experiences an unsettled period because of dissident influences at Oxford. But Charlotte Yonge held on to the ideals of the Oxford Movement all the while and she had been able to follow the careers of many men influenced

[8] Charlotte Yonge also had a collection of "true knights." See Battiscombe, Charlotte Mary Yonge, p. 55. Also note Anne Merton's "book of knights" which included the Cid. Abbeychurch pp. 115-119.

to good by the movement. By 1895 that period was quite definitely over, as Cherry says, "the whole system has altered since the times you are speaking of, when the old rules prevailed, and the great giants of Church renewal were there!" (Vacation, 133) The difficulty for one believing in the old faith is clearly expressed by Lilias:

> "These younger men either go very, very much further than we older ones dreamt of, or they have flaws in their faith, and sometimes--which is the strangest difficulty--the vehement observance and ritual with flaws beneath in their faith perhaps, or their loyalty--Socialist fancies." (Vacation, 133)[9]

People of Cherry and Lilias' generation may view with pride the progress which the church made, socially through philanthropy and religiously through the revival effort. But their efforts did not do away with "all the guilt and misery in the world;" (Vacation, 133) and so the younger generation experiments in a different manner. Charlotte Yonge's cry seems to be against new experiments which turn away from the Church as an inspiration and authority. "Socialist," incidentally, is a most unusual word to meet in a novel by Miss Yonge and both the word and its context are an indication of the great gap between the era of her birth in 1823 and the date of the novel.

Both domestic manners and religious attitudes changed beyond Miss Yonge's ability to sympathise with them. She was left with the memory of a bygone era.

[9] The incoherence of this passage may be indicative of Miss Yonge's inability to comprehend the nature of the changes which had gone on around her, although the lack of comprehension is here mediated through the character of Lilias.

To her credit, however, we must add that her honest portrayal of society is a true reflection of the change which had occurred in England during the second half of the century. We cannot condemn her merely because she did not sympathise with the attitudes of the new era.

## iv

## Modern Broods; or, Developments Unlooked For

Charlotte Yonge begins Modern Broods (1900) by introducing her readers to a new family of characters, Magdaline Prescott and her four much younger step-sisters, Agatha, Pauline, Vera and Theckla. Miss Prescott, who has provided for herself and her sisters by working as a governess, has just inherited a small home. She retires from her profession in order to set up house for her sisters who have hitherto lived in a boarding school. The four young girls do not know their elder step-sister very well and tension in the new household arises when it becomes obvious that there will be a conflict in the attitudes of the two generations.

Magdaline or "Maidie," of course, represents the older generation. Her very profession places her in this category, a profession which Magdaline herself admits is considered "quite passé" because she does not have the qualifications of "high-school diploma young ladies."[10]

[10] C. M. Yonge, Modern Broods; or, Developments Unlooked For (London: Macmillan and Co. Ltd., 1900), p. 5. Hereafter all references to this work in this chapter will be followed by Modern and a page number in parenthesis.

As a representative of the older views Maidie is especially distressed by the deficiencies of her young sisters in two areas and these seem to be the two areas which Miss Yonge wished most earnestly to criticise in the modern way of raising children. Maidie discovers that the girls are deficient both in their general education and in their religious training.

Even though the girls have been attending boarding school, and presumably have done well with their lessons, they do not seem to have learned much. Soon after the family moves into their new home they explore the surrounding countryside and Magdaline discovers that "though the girls had attended botanical classes, they did not recognize spear-wort when they saw it, and Agatha thought the old catalogue fashions of botany were quite exploded." (Modern, 28) It is, of course, the "catalogue fashion" of botany and other subjects which young characters learned and enjoyed in many of the earlier domestic novels.

A more astonishing ignorance in the four young sisters is their lack of Biblical knowledge. After Cherry and Lilias' discussion in The Long Vacation we are not surprised when the young girls do not respond with enthusiasm to Magdaline's suggestion of teaching in the local Sunday school. However, their almost total ignorance of the Bible is far greater than that displayed by Dolores Mohun in The Two Sides of the Shield:

> /The sisters/ had betrayed so much ignorance alike of Samuel's history and of the Gospel of St. Luke, that she had resolved to endeavour at a thorough teaching of the Old and New Testaments for the first hour on alternate days, giving one day in the week to Catechism and Prayer Book.

> She asked what they had done before.
> "Mrs. Best always read something at prayer."
> "Something?"
> "Something out of the Bible."
> "No, the Testament."
> "I am sure it was the Bible, it was so fat." (Modern, 49)

Unfortunately Miss Yonge does not follow up the success or failure of Magdaline's plan of religious education. Nor does she continue to develop the situation at the Prescott home to any great extent. This promising family situation is gradually replaced by attention to the lives of other characters, characters from Beechcroft at Rockstone, The Long Vacation and the family chronicles. The direction of Miss Yonge's interest can be surmised from the very beginning of the novel when it comes to light that the Prescott's new home is near Rockstone. Soon, in fact, the focus of the novel shifts away from the Prescotts toward old friends. Miss Yonge very quickly resolves the initial situation with which she opens Modern Broods. Agatha, the leader of the rebellion against the oldest sister, goes off to Oxford and when she returns for her first vacation it is without her former spirit of opposition.

Miss Yonge was, it appears, unable to sustain her interest in the new set of characters and the new domestic situation. The characters and situations which do interest her in this novel concern the Merrifield, Mohun and Underwood families. However, even when she does shift her attention to more familiar characters and settings, Miss Yonge does not develop a single story line or even concentrate on one set of characters.

It is difficult to recount the plot of Modern Broods. Our attention is required for many characters in a variety of circumstances. Bernard Underwood, for example, returns from India with his wife, Phyllis née Merrifield. We are concerned with his grief after the death of a favourite child. His favourite sister, Angela Underwood, also returns to England from Australia after attending "her slowly declining old friend, Sister Constance" (Modern, 167) who, we remember from The Castle-Builders, was Lord Herbert's wife. Angela brings with her a young girl, Lena, whose parentage is in question. Another branch of the Merrifield family claims her as the daughter of a brother whom they had neglected.

In addition to these matters there is interest in Vera Prescott's engagement and in her sister Paula's religious aspirations. There is also a minor story concerning young Wilfred Merrifield's gambling and the potential dishonouring of the Merrifield family name. Aunts Jane and Ada make an appearance in the novel as do Cherry Grinstead, Dolores Mohun, Lance Underwood and several others.

The presence of so many characters serves one useful function for Miss Yonge. By the end of Modern Broods she is able to resolve the lives of several of her characters whose fates were left uncertain in earlier novels. Angela Underwood, for example, visits the scene of her stormy adolescence and feels contentment for the first time. She says, "Oh, I am glad to have been at home, and made it all up, to bear away--and leave with you the sense of Peace." (Modern, 292) Her sense of Peace had been

pending for a quarter of a century as The Pillars of the House was published in 1873, and it is well Miss Yonge establishes it when she does for Angela drowns on her return voyage to Australia but only after nobly saving her brother Bernard's life. Her own death and heroic rescue amply make up for a careless act which caused the boating accident and the death of Theodore Underwood in The Pillars. Doloras Mohun is another whose future becomes certain. Dolores in Modern Broods is "now an accredited lecturer in technical classes. . . ." (Modern, 47) Even the fate of Vale Leston is settled when the Underwood family decide to establish a kind of modern religious retreat for women with Magdaline Prescott taking an active role.

In general there is no one lesson or even theme present in Modern Broods. The notions of duty and obedience are not part of the development of the novel at all. The novel seems to have no direction or point and the only aspect of behaviour or manners which comes under scrutiny is the subject which she takes up in all the novels written during her declining years, the conflict of generations. Yet even this topic gets an inconclusive treatment. The Prescott conflict, as we have seen, is quickly resolved and in other instances, such as the disgraceful behaviour of Wilfred Merrifield, Charlotte Yonge fails to make a judgment on either side of the question.

The fact that in this last domestic novel Charlotte Yonge does not take a firm stand on the issues between the generations can be seen clearly in Miss Yonge's

presentation of the Rockstone High School Graduation. Two women speak; one of them represents the older attitude, and the other represents the more modern view.

Arthurine Arthuret speaks first. She is described by the second speaker in private conversation as "a tremendous Liberal, almost a Socialist." (Modern, 140) Perhaps it is for these political persuasions that she is so cruelly named by Miss Yonge. At any rate, Miss Yonge gives her an attentive audience.

> The female population eagerly listened while she painted in vivid colours the aim of education, in raising the status of women, and extending their sphere not only of influence in the occult manner which had hitherto been their way of working through others, but in an open manner, which compelled attention. . . . (Modern, 147-8)

The kind of reception given the second speaker by the young audience is not described. Bessie Merrifield, a cousin to Sir Jasper's family, has become a successful authoress. Yet despite her own somewhat independent profession she exhorts the audience to heed old-fashioned goals:

> she trusted that the cultivation [of young minds in school], which here went on so prosperously, was leading--if she might use old well-accustomed words--to the advancement of God's glory, the good of His Church, aye! and to the safety, honour, and welfare of our Sovereign and her dominions. (Modern, 149)

Neither here nor at any other point in the novel does Charlotte Yonge give a clear judgment on these divergent points of view nor even indicate clearly why her preference is for the older attitudes. She presents the old and new as being in conflict and we are, in this novel, aware of

her uneasiness and her vaguely expressed preference for the old. General Merrifield says to his son-in-law, Bernard Underwood, "Old-fashioned severity used to be the rule with lads, but it seems only to alienate them now and make them think themselves unjustly treated. what is one to do with these boys?" (Modern, 256) Charlotte Yonge does not answer the question nor does she exhort young Wilfred to submit to authority through the virtues of duty and obedience.

What we have in the last domestic novel is a collection of characters and situations without direction and purpose and it is clear that Modern Broods is the culmination of a long period of decline. All the important characteristics of the earlier domestic novels are missing in this last effort. There is no character concerned with his or her duty and obedience to either parent or husband. In fact these mid-victorian virtues play almost no part in the novel and it is not surprising, therefore, that there is no significant character development. Neither does religion play a prominent role. Vera Prescott's religious aspirations are only vaguely hinted at and neither church attendance nor religious principles have any influence on the behaviour of any of the characters. Nor is there much criticism of society in this novel; Miss Yonge does not take up any topic such as levelling or class structure as she did in Beechcroft at Rockstone and The Long Vacation.

# C H A P T E R  VIII

# THE EFFECTS OF THE NOTIONS OF DUTY AND OBEDIENCE

## i

## Introduction

Miss Yonge's achievements as a domestic novelist are notable. She developed long and ingenious story lines, which remained simple, easy to follow and engaged the attention of the reader. She drew characters in the round, whose lives became of great interest to several generations of readers.[1] She wrote dialogue which is as real and as flowing as actual reported conversation. None of these virtues as a writer was entirely fortuitous. She was very industrious, as demonstrated by her huge list of publications, not to mention the fact that she edited the magazine, the Monthly Packet, for more than forty years. She was very observant, a characteristic which was enhanced by her love of nature and the walks in rural lanes and fields which were an outcome of it.[2] She had an ear for language, a capacity enhanced by her memory, and by her habit of writing down even long conversations after retiring to her room for the night.[3] She was intelligent, even intellectual, well read, and as well educated as almost any woman of her

[1] Battiscombe, Charlotte Mary Yonge, p. 67-68.

[2] Ibid., p. 55, 59, 70.

[3] Ibid., p. 60. Also Coleridge, Charlotte Mary Yonge, pp. 373-379.

time.[4] She always had a large enough income to make herself invulnerable to the commercial considerations of publishing. Yet, given all these capabilities and advantages, it is difficult to disagree with that verdict that she was a good, talented writer, but not a genius. She was unable to bridge the gulf, which, as Mrs. Battiscombe says, "lies between talent and genius."[5]

The reason for this is not hard to find. There were several factors in Charlotte Yonge's life which worked to her advantage and benefited her literary efforts, especially in the early years of her career. However, these same factors worked to her disadvantage and were, therefore, detrimental to her literary career as she grew older. Several influences and conditions in Charlotte Yonge's life became obstacles to her continuing development as a writer and Charlotte Yonge was not able to overcome them.

Her relatively secluded life at Otterbourne, for example, afforded her great opportunities for observing the detail and the continuity of rural and small town domestic life. She knew her settings so well because she lived them. Her deliberate refusal to go to London[6] to be fêted as a literary lioness protected her against the distractions of metropolitan life and also from the temptation to write about matters which were relatively

[4] Battiscombe, p. 17 and pp. 38-9.

[5] Charlotte Mary Yonge, p. 59.

[6] Coleridge, op. cit., p. 228.

unknown to her. The domestic novels are in-depth portraits of certain aspects of an age and as such they will always retain an historical and a sociological value, but at least in part because of the limitations of Charlotte Yonge's situation and experiences the domestic novels lack universal validity and therefore have limited literary merit.

Her literary efforts were also both helped and burdened by the men who were her literary and spiritual advisors. William Yonge and John Keble were very influential during the early years of Charlotte Yonge's literary career. Her father's admonition that she should write only to do good and Keble's belief that all behaviour should have a religious foundation, were principles that stayed with her throughout her life. Her father's role as editor and Keble's role as moral confessor were roles which were critical in her development as a writer. But on their deaths, in 1854 and 1866 respectively, there were no replacements, nor could there be any; and it was impossible for Charlotte Yonge on her own either to modify or to expand the principles her mentors had given her. Furthermore, she needed someone to scrutinize and edit her writing. Georgina Battiscombe remarks that once her father and Keble "were no longer there to correct and advise, the value of these home critics became at once apparent."[7] The quality of Charlotte Yonge's work did indeed begin to fall off in the late 1860's.

[7] op. cit., p. 131.

Again, her indifference to literary criticism[8] as well as to the blandishments of London literary and social life saved her from the danger of following fashionable trends. But it also prevented her from receiving sound literary advice. Such advice might have been to the effect that religious and literary purposes were not always identical. As it was, her deeply held religious beliefs were fundamental to her literary efforts,[9] and her manner of observance of those beliefs mandated that many aspects of life were not to be described or examined. As a result the characters in her domestic novels behave in certain ways because of the effect that religiously derived principles have upon them, but Miss Yonge never provides deeper psychological explanations which might, for example, account for their particular reactions to such principles.

One important fact links together all these examples, Charlotte Yonge's inability to adapt to and incapacity for change. Once she had adopted a stance or taken a moral position, it was apparently impossible for her to change. This is especially apparent in her acceptance of the notions of duty and obedience, and in the way in which she used the notions as the basic themes of her domestic novels. Her secluded life, her reliance on home critics

[8] Charlotte Yonge read reviews of her works but there is no evidence that she was in any way influenced by the judgements of literary critics. See Coleridge, op. cit., pp. 557 and 558. Her indifference is evident in a letter (dated 19th January, 1869) referring to the importance given to religion in the Monthly Packet. Coleridge, p. 351.

[9] Battiscombe, op. cit., p. 14.

and her indifference to criticism all contributed to the fixity of her belief in the essential moral value of dutiful and obedient behaviour. However, because of the rigidity of this belief, the effects of the notions on Charlotte Yonge's domestic novels was not the same throughout her long career. During the early years and a good way through the middle years of her career her belief in duty and obedience had a beneficial effect on her writing because circumstances were propitious, not least being the fact that her belief was so widely shared. But in the later years exactly the opposite was true because the conditions of domestic life, and of society in general, changed. The fact that Victorian society changed, and changed greatly, is of great significance, therefore, in determining the effects of duty and obedience on Charlotte Mary Yonge's domestic novels.

ii

## Change and the Victorian Notions of Duty and Obedience

Change is as characteristic of Victorian society as is the influence of religion. "Queen Victoria was born in one world. She died in another. History has seldom recorded a greater transformation in so short a period of time."[10] Queen Victoria was born in 1819 and died in 1901. Charlotte Mary Yonge lived almost the same span of years. She was born four years after Victoria and died just two

[10] Clarence R. Decker, The Victorian Conscience (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1952), p. 175.

months after her queen; therefore she witnessed the same changes in England as did Victoria. Both women saw change in almost every facet of life, political, social, economic and religious. During Victoria's lifetime England experienced two political reform acts, unprecendented industrial and population growth, the effects of Darwinism, movement toward the emancipation of women, the effects of historical and scientific criticism on religious beliefs and the resulting effects on the morality of society. All these changes and more occurred in a relatively short span of less than three quarters of a century.

Charlotte Mary Yonge did not readily accept or adapt to the changing Victorian world; she was a "most conservative of ladies. . . ."[11] Her family had been land owning squires and Tory for generations,[12] and were in no sense part of the rising middle-classes. Nor had they any other impetus to accept new ideas. In addition the Tractarian bias in Miss Yonge's religious beliefs was a deterrent to accepting new attitudes. The Tractarians were "consciously opposed to the movements which characterized the nineteenth century--science, democracy, religious liberalism, and both forms of radical economics (that of laissez faire and that of socialism). . . ."[13]

From its inception the Oxford Movement stressed authority and Charlotte Yonge accepted the dictates of

[11] Chadwick, The Victorian Church, II, 194-5.

[12] Battiscombe, Charlotte Mary Yonge, p. 20, 22, 41, 50.

[13] Baker, The Novel and the Oxford Movement, p. 45.

authority in religious as well as in domestic life. Her religious beliefs were a great source of strength for her. Not only did she gain spiritual strength from frequent praying and church attendance but whatever strength and purpose her novels have, derives from her belief in the necessity for a religious foundation in the daily routine of life. Charlotte Yonge chose as her motto, "Pro Ecclesia Dei."[14] All her life was dedicated to the glory of God, all her life and the fruits of her labours, including her novels of domestic life.

However, Miss Yonge's implicit faith in the religious authority of the church truncated her intellectual and literary development as well as making her averse to change and this is reflected in the quality of her novels. Because she accepted so completely the necessity for her own obedience to authority she never questioned the basis of that authority or the reasons for its commands. Keble's influence was life long. "Although he died in 1866 and Miss Yonge lived thirty-four years longer, she never swerved from his beliefs or departed from her faithful adherence to the early phase of Oxford Movement thought and practice."[15] Thus Charlotte Yonge gradually lost touch with the changing practices and new ideas in Victorian society. "In the world of the eighties and nineties she grew out of place, her mind could not adapt to democracy or Biblical criticism or emancipated women."[16]

[14] Battiscombe, Charlotte Mary Yonge, p. 79.

[15] Margaret Maison, The victorian vision, p. 40.

[16] Chadwick, The Victorian Church, II, 215.

Charlotte Yonge had a long publishing career, from 1844 to 1901. Her domestic novels portray life as it was when the novels were written. Thus Charlotte Yonge, perhaps unintentionally, records a changing Victorian society. But she maintained her belief in the necessity for life to be regulated by the notions of duty and obedience, and for her, these notions demanded behaviour which was appropriate to, if not typical of, only the early and mid-victorian years. This is the behaviour which she calls for in Womankind which she wrote at a time when she could reflect on her youth and the values prevalent then and compare them to a new and different set of values and also to behaviour which increasingly challenged the old. The result is that in her old age the society which Charlotte Yonge recorded and the characters she drew could not be reconciled to her early Victorian concept of the notions of duty and obedience. Because such great changes occurred in Victorian society and because Miss Yonge records them while remaining faithful to her youthful understanding of the notions of duty and obedience, the effects of these notions on her domestic novels changed, markedly but gradually.

We have already noted the effects of the notions of duty and obedience in individual domestic novels. In order to assess the over-all effect of the notions it is useful to divide Miss Yonge's career loosely into three periods, early, middle and late, in order to see how the effects of duty and obedience on her domestic novels changed during the nearly sixty years of her career.

The early novels are those written for young people

between 1844 and 1854: Abbeychurch, Scenes and Characters, Henrietta's Wish, The Two Guardians and The Castle-Builders. In them Charlotte Yonge uses two literary devices or techniques which worked successfully and which she uses to a greater or lesser extent in all her domestic novels. One device is her typical pattern of character development. Some of her characters begin the novels with correct principles of behaviour and some, even heroes and heroines, do not. But which ever the case a character typically errs in his domestic or social conduct. The error results from an erroneous judgment on his part or a mistaken assessment of a situation. Then, either immediately or at long last, the character recognizes both that a particular action was erroneous and why it was so. Finally the character comes to accept the principles of duty and obedience and works to improve his behaviour and thus can be said to have undergone character development. In this manner Charlotte Yonge is able to emphasise how principles, and especially those of duty and obedience, have a practical application to daily life. As all behaviour has consequences, the principles upon which behaviour, especially domestic and social behaviour, is founded, are of the utmost importance.

The other device is a sudden change in the circumstances of her characters. The change usually occurs at the beginning of a novel. Familiar props and comforts, whether they be spiritual or material, persons, situations or things, are taken away from her characters. Although not stripped entirely of support, they are left largely on their own to adjust to the change with their only guide

the principles in which they believe. Often, of course, the characters are not clear about their principles, or do not hold them strongly enough, or do not hold to the correct principles, that is to say, to the notions of duty and obedience. In each novel the reader's attention is directed to the manner in which the characters deal with their problems.

In the early novels these two devices are used in uncomplicated ways. Character development is straightforward and there are, in any case, relatively few characters. Changes in circumstance are often not permanent, and, even if serious, are not dwelt upon. It is easy, therefore, for Charlotte Yonge to spell out the lesson in each novel and the lessons tend to be limited in application, although based upon general principles.

In these novels Charlotte Yonge is confident of her viewpoint and writes with authority. She details the domestic lives of her characters while at the same time assessing their behaviour according to the degree to which it is dutiful and obedient. These novels are obviously the result of Charlotte Yonge's wish to do good, and duty and obedience are obvious although not obtrusive. The effect of these two notions, seen especially in the desire to teach a lesson in moral behaviour, is to give both purpose and direction to the development of the stories and to the development of the characters. Miss Yonge makes a single-minded effort to persuade the reader to accept the standard which she presents as the proper, that is Anglican, point of view. In the early novels she illustrates what she perceives to be the accepted and

normal standard of behaviour of the time. The notions of duty and obedience provide the criterion by which Miss Yonge judges the conduct of her characters. So certain is Miss Yonge of her standard, furthermore, that behaviour which is right and that which is wrong are easily distinguished from each other. Similarly the consequences of both forms of behaviour are easy for her to depict. Thus the early novels combine simple, direct stories, a moral purpose and simple uncomplicated moral judgments.

The novels of Miss Yonge's middle or mature period include, The Heir of Redclyffe, Heartsease, The Daisy Chain, The Clever Woman of the Family, The Pillars of the House and The Three Brides. In these novels, by and large, Miss Yonge still writes with confidence in her moral point of view. The great difference between these novels as compared to the early ones, is that Miss Yonge's techniques are much more highly developed. She confines herself, in the main, to rural settings and middle-class characters as she always did but the circumstances of their lives, beginning with the nature of the change to which they are subjected, are more complex and are described in more detail. Further, Miss Yonge develops at length a greater number of characters and portrays their behaviour in much greater detail within the confines of her usual pattern of character development, that is error, recognition of error, and attempted improvement of behaviour by strict adherence to the dictates of the notions of duty and obedience.

In the middle period, because Miss Yonge creates long stories and intricate character development, the presence of the notions of duty and obedience is not as obvious as in the early novels although it is still the standard by which the behaviour of the characters is judged. Duty and obedience are most evident at the end of the novels when the stories and the development of some characters come to resolution and final judgment. It is therefore at the end of the novels of the middle period that we are most aware of the lesson in moral behaviour which the novels still attempt to teach. The effect of the notions of duty and obedience is not as immediately obvious as in her early years. Yet the effect is basically the same. The notions provide an underlying purpose and direction for the stories and character development. Miss Yonge tells a long and intricate story but it is still her intention to do good and this necessity, still attempted by means of a lesson, provides the framework for all incidents and character development.

Yet, especially toward the end of this period significant changes may be discerned in the domestic novels. There is, first, a change in Miss Yonge's point of view. She begins to defend a moral standpoint rather than to illustrate one which is generally accepted. This may be seen in large part as a function of the second major change, the appearance in the novels of evidence of changes in Victorian society. These begin to occur in The Clever Woman and are even more evident in The Three Brides. Some evidence of changes in Victorian society are present in the novels as early as the fifties when there is mention

of some liberal ideas such as political emancipation and biblical criticism. At first Charlotte Yonge remains certain of church authority and certain of a generally accepted code of behaviour and she denies the validity of the new ideas even as she faithfully records their presence in victorian society. It mattered little to her that in some circles "intellectual theories, including that of morality were insecure;" the truth was that in victorian society in general "moral values were firm until about 1870. . . ."[17] But the presence of threatening challenges to the accepted code of behaviour does become increasingly evident in this middle period.

As the years pass, the social and domestic conduct which Miss Yonge believes duty and obedience required is challenged more and more by a changing idea of woman's role in the family and in society. As she becomes, perhaps unconsciously, less certain of the authority of her position and of its general acceptance by society at large, she is less able to judge right and wrong behaviour with certainty and therefore less able to make final judgments about the social and moral conduct of her characters in the altered circumstances in which she places them. In the middle years of her career, by and large, Charlotte Yonge is able to maintain the quality of her storytelling, it is the lessons, which are based on her judgments and which can give purpose and direction to the novels, that begin to falter.

Thus by the seventies the effect of duty and obedience, as seen in the lessons, changes. In the Three Brides especially the lesson is somewhat inconclusive and therefore

[17] Houghton, The Victorian Frame of Mind, pp. 10-11.

the story does not end with the same sense of resolution and finality which characterizes the earlier stories. Miss Yonge defends the old standard and attacks the new but she is at a loss to show how duty and obedience can be applied to the life of a modern young woman. This is a clear indication that Miss Yonge was unable to adapt to a changing Victorian world. In the earlier novels, the lesson demands that behaviour be brought into conformity with an acceptable standard. But in the sixties, and even more in the seventies, the standard was changing and Miss Yonge was beginning to have difficulty portraying behaviour which is both contemporary and in accordance with the notions of duty and obedience.

In her last novels Miss Yonge does not try to depict behaviour which is both contemporary and also in accordance with the notions of duty and obedience as she understood them. The novels written during her late period include Magnum Bonum, The Two Sides of the Shield, Beechcroft at Rockstone, The Long Vacation and Modern Broods. These novels are poor in comparison with those of her middle period even though she uses some of the characters who people her best works. Charlotte Yonge continues, in these last works, to depict contemporary small town, middle-class Victorian life, but the purpose and direction which the notions of duty and obedience had once given to her narrative techniques is no longer present. The result is that domestic life is no longer depicted in full detail, characters are not developed in detail or at length and there is only the rudimetary presence of her favoured pattern of error in behaviour, recognition of error and attempted improvement.

Life in Victorian England changed so greatly that Charlotte Yonge could no longer show that the behaviour which she believed duty and obedience require is right and proper in the domestic world of the eighties and nineties. She tries to make judgments about modern conduct but they come out in the form of criticism of manners rather than judgments based on principles. In her early and middle periods Charlotte Yonge had relied heavily on examining behaviour for signs of underlying principles but the concentration had been, and continued to be, so great on the outward forms that when these changed she could not adapt the principles to apply to modern manners and conduct. Thus at the end of her career Charlotte Yonge is unable to teach effectively a lesson in moral behaviour. In the last novels she tells rambling, almost pointless stories, about characters for whom the reader has little interest, unless he is acquainted with them from the earlier novels.

In her last novels the effects of the notions of duty and obedience is clearly detrimental. She could not discard her long standing reliance on these notions as her means for doing good in her domestic fiction and yet she was unable to adapt the notions to the changing Victorian world. The depiction, analysis and judgment of moral behaviour had once been a useful and successful means by which Charlotte Yonge could attempt to do good, morally speaking. But she had become dependent on this one way in which to do good and, more importantly, she had, consciously or not, limited herself to the successful techniques of her early years in order to demonstrate a lesson in duty and obedience.

Thus, the long term, over-all effect of the notions of duty and obedience on Charlotte Yonge's domestic novels is adverse. She was, evidently, unable to adapt, improve and innovate once she established her literary techniques and accepted doing good as a reason for writing. This is not to say that Charlotte Yonge wrote poor fiction only at the end of her life. But all the novels of her last years are poor and show the cumulative effect of her inability to change and grow in her literary life.

Charlotte Yonge published her first novel in order to do good to other girls like herself. She was unable or did not choose to change her reason for writing novels or the techniques she used to tell her stories. Charlotte Yonge was unable to see past the immediate goal of each novel; she was unable to change; she was unable to question the principles which she had been taught or the authority of her teachers. Her very great storytelling ability was, therefore, greatly limited by the notions of duty and obedience, notions which she used as her means for doing good. It is fortunate that these notions and Charlotte Yonge's storytelling ability were a successful combination during the early and middle years of her career and that we have, as a result, a number of very good novels of Victorian middle-class life. But the inescapable conclusion is that duty and obedience and the underlying wish to do good limited Charlotte Yonge's creative efforts to one purpose for writing fiction and kept even this one purpose from being successful as Victorian society changed.

# A SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Avery, Gillian. Victorian People: In Life and Literature. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1970.

Baker, Joseph Ellis. The Novel and the Oxford Movement. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1932.

Battiscombe, Georgina. Charlotte Mary Yonge: The Story of an Uneventful Life. London: Constable and Company, Ltd., 1943.

_____. John Keble. A Study in Limitations. London: Constable and Company, Ltd., 1963.

Battiscombe, Georgina and Marghanita Laski, eds. A Chaplet for Charlotte Yonge. London: The Cresset Press, 1965.

Briggs, Asa. The Age of Improvement. London: Longmans, Green and Co. Ltd., 1966.

_____. Victorian People: A Reassessment of Persons and Themes, 1851-1867. New York: Harper and Row, 1963.

Buckley, Jerome Hamilton. The Victorian Temper: A Study in Literary Culture. New York: Vintage Books, 1964.

Chadwick, Owen. The Mind of the Oxford Movement. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1960.

_____. The Victorian Church. 2 vols. New York: Oxford University Press, 1966.

Clark, G. Kitson. The Making of Victorian England. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1963.

Coleridge, Christabel. Charlotte Mary Yonge. Her Life and Letters. London: Macmillan and Co. Ltd., 1903.

Decker, Clarence R. The Victorian Conscience. New York: Twayne Publishers, 1952.

Delafield, E. M. "Introduction." Charlotte Mary Yonge: The Story of an Uneventful Life by Georgina Battiscombe. London: Constable and Company, Ltd., 1943, pp. 9-15.

Halévy, Elie. The Age of Peel and Cobden. A History of the English People, 1841-1852. London: Ernest Behn Limited, 1947.

Harvey, Sir Paul, ed. Oxford Companion to Classical Literature. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962.

Hayter, Alethea. "The Sanitary Idea and a Victorian Novelist." History Today. 19 (1969), 840-847.

Houghton, Walter E. The Victorian Frame of Mind, 1830-1870. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1954.

Jenkins, Elizabeth. "Charlotte Yonge as a Novelist." A Chaplet for Charlotte Yonge. Ed. Georgina Battiscombe and Marghanita Laski. London: The Cresset Press, 1965, pp. 3-10.

Kitson Clark, G. The Making of Victorian England. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1965.

Maison, Margaret M. The Victorian Vision: Studies in the Religious Novel. New York: Sheed and Ward, 1961.

Moberly, C. A. E. Dulce Domun. George Moberly, His Family and Friends. London: John Murray, 1911.

Peel, C. S. "Homes and Habits." Early Victorian England. Vol. I. Ed. G. M. Young. London: Oxford University Press, 1934, pp. 77-153.

Romanes, Ethel, Charlotte Mary Yonge: An Appreciation. London: A. R. Mowbray and Co. Ltd., 1908.

Stang, Richard. The Theory of the Novel in England: 1850-1870. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1959.

Thompson, David. England in the Nineteenth Century. London: Penguin Books, 1966.

Tillotson, Kathleen. "The Heir of Redclyffe." Mid-Victorian Studies, by Kathleen and Geoffrey Tillotson. Oxford: The Athlone Press, 1965, pp. 49-56.

_____. Novels of the Eighteen-Forties. London: Oxford University Press, 1962.

Yonge, Charlotte Mary. Abbeychurch; or, Self-Control and Self-Conceit. London: J. and C. Mozley, 1872.

_____. Beechcroft at Rockstone. 2 vols. London: Macmillan and Co., 1888.

Yonge, Charlotte Mary. The Castle-Builders; or, The Deferred Confirmation. New Edition. London: A. D. Innes and Co., 1896.

_____. The Clever Woman of the Family. London: Macmillan and Co. Ltd., 1915.

_____. The Daisy Chain; or, Aspirations. A Family Chronicle. London: Macmillan and Co., 1894.

_____. Heartsease; or, The Brother's Wife. London: Macmillan and Co. Ltd., 1902.

_____. The Heir of Redclyffe. London: Gerald Duckworth and Co. Ltd., 1964.

_____. Henrietta's Wish; or, Domineering. A Tale. London: Macmillan and Co. Ltd., 1888.

_____. "Introduction." Sintram and his Companions and Undine. Friedrich, Baron de la Motte Fouque. London: Wells, Gardner, Darton and Co., 1901, pp. xiii-xix.

_____. John Keble's Parishes. A History of Hursley and Otterbourne. London: Macmillan and Co. Ltd., 1898.

_____. "Lifelong Friends." A Chaplet for Charlotte Yonge. Ed. Georgina Battiscombe and Marghanita Laski. London: The Cresset Press, 1965, pp. 181-185.

_____. The Long Vacation. London: Macmillan and Co. Ltd., 1901.

_____. Magnum Bonum; or, Mother Carey's Brood. London: Macmillan and Co., 1882.

_____. Modern Broods; or, Developments Unlooked For. London: Macmillan and Co. Ltd., 1900.

_____. ed. Musings over the Christian Year and Lyra Innocentium, together with a Few Gleanings of Recollections of the Rev. J. Keble, gathered by Several Friends. New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1871.

_____. The Pillars of the House; or, Under Wode, Under Rode. 2 vols. London: Macmillan and Co., 1889.

Yonge, Charlotte Mary. Scenes and Characters; or, Eighteen Months at Beechcroft. London: John and Charles Mozley, 1853.

_____. Scenes and Characters; or, Eighteen Months at Beechcroft. London: Macmillan and Co., 1889.

_____. The Three Brides. London: Macmillan and Co., 1889.

_____. The Trial; or, More Links of the Daisy Chain. London: Macmillan and Co., 1887.

_____. The Two Guardians; or, Home in This World. London: Macmillan and Co. Ltd., 1899.

_____. The Two Sides of the Shield. London: Macmillan and Co., 1889.

_____. Womankind. London: Mozley and Smith, 1876.

Young, G. M. "Portrait of an Age." Early Victorian England, 1830-1865. Vol. 2 Ed. G. M. Young. London: Oxford University Press, 1934, pp. 411-503.

_____. Victorian England. Portrait of An Age. London: Oxford University Press, 1960.